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Comparison of the Faunal Remains from French and British Refuse Pits at Fort Michilimackinac: A Study in Changing Subsistence Patterns, by Charles E. Cleland

The French in Gaspé, 1534 to 1760, by David Lee

The Armstrong Mound on Rainy River, Ontario, by Walter A. Kenyon

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Cover: British ships off Ile Percé drawn on the spot by Captain Hervey Smyth, 1758. Captain Smyth's painting shows that as late as 1758 Percé Rock was pierced by two openings. The outside arch is now collapsed. *(Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Collection No. 37. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.)*

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Comparison of the Faunal Remains from French and British Refuse Pits at Fort Michilimackinac: A Study in Changing Subsistence Patterns, by Charles E. Cleland

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Comparison of the Faunal Remains from French and British Refuse Pits at Fort Michilimackinac: A Study in Changing Subsistence Patterns

by Charles E. Cleland

Abstract

A study of animal bones from French (1715-60) and British (1760-80) refuse pits at Fort Michilimackinac (Mackinaw City, Michigan) reveals subsistence patterns of the Europeans during their occupation of this site. Their eating habits are compared with those of the Indians who occupied the Late Woodland Juntunen site on Bois Blanc Island in the Straits of Mackinac. In contrast, the Europeans are shown to have relied heavily upon food supplies brought into the Straits area. Differences between French and British diets are shown to have been a result of the more efficient transportation system during British occupation of the site as well as the social, political, ideological and technological systems of both cultures.

Introduction

By the late 17th century, after nearly half a century of profitable fur trading activities in the Upper Great Lakes region, French merchants, traders and missionaries realized that control of the Straits of Mackinac between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron was the key to the control of the entire northwestern frontier. To this end they established small palisaded forts, first on the north side of the Straits and later, in about 1715, on the south shore near what is now Mackinaw City, Michigan. The French controlled the latter fort, which they called Michilimackinac, until 1760, when it was surrendered to the British. In September of 1761, Fort Michilimackinac was garrisoned by 40 troops of the 60th Regiment and thus the Straits of Mackinac fell under British domination. During the next 20 years the original stockade was enlarged and many French structures were removed to facilitate the construction of British military installations. The British finally abandoned the site in 1780, when they moved the fort to a more strategic position on nearby Mackinac Island. The original site of Fort Michilimackinac was not reoccupied in succeeding years, and the remaining foundations were in fact protected from destruction by accumulations of beach sands.

Excavations at the site of Fort Michilimackinac by the Museum of Michigan State University in cooperation with the Mackinac Island Park Commission have produced an abundance of both architectural and artifactual information (Maxwell and Binford 1961). One of the most informative classes of features discovered in these excavations was refuse pits constructed under the storage basements of houses dating from both the French and British occupations. In 1961 and again in 1962, I was asked to identify quantities of animal bone which represented food remains from these refuse pits. Although animal bone was recovered in great quantity from nearly all areas of the site, this analysis was restricted to samples of bone from clearly datable features. The sample from the French occupation was obtained from the following features:
Feature No. 70, MS² 1220 – a storage basement below a French house ca. 1720-34
Feature No. 71, MS² 1221 – a storage basement below a French house ca. 1740
Feature No. 72, MS² – a small bell bottom storage pit ca. 1740
Feature No. 75, MS² 1229 – a French storage pit ca. 1740
Bone representing the British occupation was obtained from five refuse pits below British period houses of the following provenance:
Feature No. 206, MS² 1822-27, square 220L30
Feature No. 212, MS² 1907-08, square 230L110
Feature No. 213, MS² 206, square 240L130
Feature No. 215, MS² 1959, square 230L150
Feature No. 216, MS² 1944-46, square 240L110
A comprehensive study of the food remains from the Juntunen site on Bois Blanc Island in the Straits of Mackinac by Cleland (1966) provides material for a comparison between the aboriginal subsistence patterns of the Straits area and those of the French and British occupations at Michilimackinac. This site was intermittently occupied between A.D. 800 and A.D. 1300.

This situation presents an ideal opportunity for a study of the changes in subsistence patterns which took place in the Straits of Mackinac area from about A.D. 1300 to A.D. 1780. Such a study, however, requires some assumptions concerning the two basic variables which determine the configuration of any subsistence system – the natural availability of food sources in the area under consideration and the cultural factors which govern the utilization of potential food resources.

Although Baerreis and Bryson (1965) have demonstrated minor climatic change for the period encompassed by this study, climatic changes of such small magnitude did not produce substantial changes in the fauna of the Straits of Mackinac area (Cleland 1966). Although the same kinds of animals are represented in different proportions in the food refuse of each of the occupations, the fact that they are represented or are indirectly represented by other species

commonly associated with them in a single faunal assemblage, points to a rather high degree of ecological stability.

If, then, we are dealing with a relatively stable natural environment, difference in the kinds and frequencies of animals used as food sources must be attributable to differential selection. Differential selection, of course, influences the local availability of species which are being systematically exploited. Whatever the case, we are here observing a cultural phenomenon and not a natural one.

The number of both identified and unidentifiable mammal, bird and fish bones from the French and British features at Fort Michilimackinac is shown in Table 1. In all instances, bone preservation was excellent so that fragile fish bone was as well preserved as dense mammal bone. The fragmented condition of much of the bone accounts for that part of the sample which could not be identified beyond class. Tables 2 and 3 are lists of the identified species represented in the pits of the French and British period structures respectively. The French sample contained 317 identified bones representing 8 species of mammals, 23 species of birds and 5 species of fish. The slightly larger British sample of 363 identified bones represented less diversity with 8 species of mammals, 16 species of birds and 4 species of fish.

All but one of the species identified from the bones in Fort Michilimackinac refuse pits have been reported from the Straits of Mackinac area within quite recent times. Only the redhead duck *(Aythya americana)* no longer occurs in the Upper Great Lakes region. This species does, however, occasionally breed as far south as southeastern Michigan and Wisconsin (Peterson 1958). The great frequency with which the bones of this duck appear in the refuse pits at Fort Michilimackinac seems to indicate that it formerly had a much wider range. The retraction in the range of the redhead is no doubt due primarily to modern hunting pressure.

The occurrence of one fish, the burbot *(Lota lota)*, seems worthy of comment since its presence indicates something of a fishing technique employed by the French. In the Upper Great Lakes the burbot occurs only in deep cold water (Hubbs and Lagler 1958). Since the aboriginal fishery of the Straits was basically a shallow water harpoon and net fishery (Cleland 1966), the burbot was probably caught by the French fishing in deep water with iron hooks like those from Fort Michilimackinac.

Feature No. 212, a refuse pit in a British basement, contained a cowrie shell *(Cypraea moneta)*, a marine mollusc native to the Indian and Pacific oceans. The "money cowrie," as this species is commonly called, was a widely used trade item and has been frequently reported from many areas of the world where it does not occur as a native species (Jackson 1917). A good example was the use of this cowrie by the Ojibwa as part of the ritual paraphernalia of the Grand Medicine Society. Ojibwa tradition relates that these shells were given to the Ojibwa by their folk hero Mi'nabo'zho (Hoffman 1891). A less colourful but more plausible origin is the Hudson's Bay Company, which used great quantities of these shells in trade for fur. The Fort Michilimackinac specimen is presumably a discarded trade item.

Three quite different methods can be used to demonstrate quantitative differences between the French and British bone samples. These are frequency of species represented by bone count, frequency of individual animals representing each species and the amount of meat provided by each species.

Figure 1 is a graphic illustration of the most common method used in analysing faunal remains from archaeological sites, the frequency of bones representing particular classes of animals. This figure indicates that the French killed fewer mammals and birds than the British, but that they caught more fish. Sheer numbers of bones, therefore, seem to indicate that fish were a much more important source of food during the French period than during the British period and that conversely, mammals became more important in the latter period than they were when the French occupied the site.

One may also compare the variety of species exploited by the occupants of Michilimackinac during these periods. Referring again to Tables 2 and 3, we see that although the French sample was smaller than the British in terms of numbers of bones, the French sample was larger in the number of individuals as well as the variety of species represented. Thus, the French were exploiting a wider variety of animal resources.

Table 1: Identified and Unidentifiable Bone From French and British Storage Pits at Fort Michilimackinac

French

Species	Features No. 70	No. 71	No. 72	No. 75	Totals	% of Total	% of Each Class
Identified Mammal	7	20	50	2	79	6.7	
Unidentifiable Mammal	59	158	156	75	448	38.1	
Total Mammal	66	178	206	77	527		44.8
Identified Bird	53	29	82	28	192	16.3	
Unidentifiable Bird	11	8	19	5	43	3.7	
Total Bird	64	37	101	33	235		20.0
Identified Fish	14	19	9	5	47	4.0	
Unidentifiable Fish	199	45	103	20	367	31.2	
Total Fish	213	64	112	25	414		35.2
Total Bone	343	279	419	135	*1176*	100.0	100.0
% of Total	29.2	23.7	35.6	11.8			

British

Species	Features No. 206	No. 212	No. 213	No. 215	No. 216	Totals	% of Total	% of Each Class
Identified Mammal	16	57	14	13	49	149	14.5	
Unidentifiable Mammal	37	243	60	15	142	497	48.2	
Total Mammal	53	300	74	28	191	646		62.7
Identified Bird	23	145	4	2	10	184	17.8	
Unidentifiable Bird	8	89	1		5	103	10.0	
Total Bird	31	234	5	2	15	287		27.8
Identified Fish	2	25			3	30	2.9	
Unidentifiable Fish	1	58	4		5	68	6.6	
Total Fish	3	83	4		8	98		9.5
Total Bone	87	617	83	30	214	*1031*	100.0	100.0
% of Total	8.4	59.8	8.1	2.9	20.8			

	Mammal	*Bird*	*Fish*
French	44.8%	20.0%	35.2%
British	62.7%	27.8%	9.5%

Table 2: Species Identified From French Period Features

Species	Features				Total Identified Bones	% of Total Identified Bone	Minimum Number of Individuals
	No. 70	No. 71	No. 72	No. 75			
Snowshoe Hare *(Lepus americanus)*			1		1		1
Beaver *(Castor canadensis)*	6	11	28		45	14.2	7
Muskrat *(Ondatra zibethicus)*		1			1	.3	1
Black Bear *(Ursus americanus)*		2	3		5	1.6	2
Marten *(Martes americana)*			3		3	.9	1
Cervidae			4		4	1.3	
Moose *(Alces alces)*		2	4		6	1.9	2
Pig *(Sus scrofa)*	1	2	7	2	12	3.8	5
Dog *(Canis familiaris)*		2			2	.6	1
Pied-Billed Grebe *(Podilymbus podiceps)*				3	3	.9	1
Great Blue Heron *(Ardea herodias)*		1		1	2	.6	2
Canada Goose *(Branta canadensis)*		2			2	.6	1
Mallard Duck *(Anas platyrhynchos)*	2			4	6	1.9	3
Green-Winged Teal *(Anas carolinensis)*		1	1		2	.9	2
Blue-Winged Teal *(Anas discors)*				1	1	.3	1
Wood Duck *(Aix sponsa)*			2	1	3	.9	2
Redhead Duck *(Aythya americana)*	3	1	1		5	1.6	4
Ring-Necked Duck *(Aythya affinis)*		1	2		3	.9	2
Lesser Scaup *(Aythya collaris)*			1		1	.3	1
Aythya sp.			1		1	.3	
Bufflehead *(Bucephala albeola)*			3		3	.9	1
Hooded Merganser *(Lophodytes cucullatus)*				1	1	.3	1
Common Merganser *(Mergus merganser)*			2		2	.6	1
Red-Breasted Merganser *(Mergus merganser)*	1	1			2	.6	2
Anseriformes	1		5	2	8	2.5	
Goshawk *(Acipiter gentilis)*		2		2	4	1.3	2
Cooper's Hawk *(Accipiter cooperii)*			2		2	.9	1
Ruffed Grouse *(Bonsa umbellus)*	2		5		7	2.2	2
Black-Bellied Plover *(Squatarola squatarola)*				1	1	.3	1
Herring Gull *(Larus argentatus)*		1			1	.3	1
Ring-Billed Gull *(Larus delawarensis)*			1		1	.3	1
Passenger Pigeon *(Ectopistes migratorius)*	43	18	55	8	124	39.1	21
Raven *(Corvus corax)*				1	1	.3	1
Chicken *(Gallus gallus)*	1		1	3	5	1.6	4
Sturgeon *(Acipenser fulvescens)*	4	17	3	3	27	8.5	4
Lake Trout *(Salvelinus namaycush)*	5		6	2	13	4.1	6
Lake Whitefish *(Coregonus* sp.)	4	1			5	1.6	3
Channel Catfish *(Ictalurus punctatus)*		1			1	.3	1
Burbot *(Lota lota)*	1				1	.3	1
Total	74	67	141	35	317		94

Table 3: Species Identified from British Period Features

Species	Features					Total Identified Bones	% of Total Identified Bone	Minimum Number of Individuals
	No. 206	No. 212	No. 213	No. 215	No. 216			
Snowshoe Hare *(Lepus americanus)*	1	1			2	4	1.1	3
Beaver *(Castor canadensis)*	5	14	5	1	15	40	11.0	8
Porcupine *(Erethizon dorsatum)*				2	2	4	1.1	2
Black Bear *(Ursus americanus)*		4			1	5	1.4	2
Cervidae					2	2	.6	
Cow *(Bos taurus)*	1	5	2		7	15	4.1	4
Pig *(Sus scrofa)*	9	33	5	10	20	77	22.2	10
Sheep *(Ovis aries)*			1			1	.3	1
Cat *(Felis domestica)*			1			1	.3	1
Common Loon *(Gavia immer)*		1			1	2	.6	1
Double-Crested Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax auritus)*					1	1	.3	1
Whistling Swan *(Cygnus columbianus)*					3	3	.8	1
Canada Goose *(Branta canadensis)*	1					1	.3	1
Mallard Duck *(Anas platyrhynchos)*	2	4				6	1.7	2
Redhead Duck *(Aythya americana)*			1			1	.3	1
Ringneck Duck *(Aythya collaris)*	1	2				3	.8	2
Hooded Merganser *(Lophodytes cucullatus)*	1	1				2	.6	1
American Merganser *(Mergus merganser)*					1	1	.3	1
Anseriformes			1	1		2	.6	
Ruffed Grouse *(Bonasa umbellus)*		1				1	.3	1
Herring Gull *(Larus argentatus)*	1	1				2	.6	2
Passenger Pigeon *(Ectopistes migratorius)*	10	131	2	1	4	148	40.8	22
Bluejay *(Cyanocitta cristata)*	1					1	.3	1
Raven *(Corvus corax)*	5	2				7	1.9	2
Domestic Turkey *(Meleagris gallopavo)*	1	1				2	.6	2
Chicken *(Gallus gallus)*		1				1	.3	1
Sturgeon *(Acipenser fulvescens)*	1	12			2	15	4.1	6
Lake Trout *(Salvelinus namaycush)*	1	7			1	9	2.5	2
Whitefish *(Coregonus* sp.)		5				5	1.4	1
Walleye *(Stizostedion vitreum)*		1				1	.3	1
Total	41	227	18	15	62	363		

Table 4: Per Cent of Pounds of Meat Provided by Various Classes of Animals	Juntunen		Fort Michilimackinac			
	Late Woodland		French		British	
	pounds	per cent	pounds	per cent	pounds	per cent
Domestic Mammals			857.5	32.12	3,755	78.35
Big Game	4,962.5	22.93	1,220	45.70	420	8.76
Small Game	1,615.25	7.46	226.8	8.49	272.3	5.68
All Other Mammals	465.0	2.14	15.0	.56		
Aquatic Birds	114.8	.53	53.34	1.99	37.4	.78
Upland Game Birds	73.4	.33	19.1	.71	19.8	.41
Predatory Birds	101.15	.46	6.3	.23		
Domestic Birds			2.24	.08	21.44	.44
All Other Birds	27.8	.12	2.4	.08	5.4	.11
Turtles	13.6	.06				
Sturgeon	12,600	58.23	144	5.39	216	4.50
Whitefish	1,237	5.71	31.2	1.16	10.4	.21
Lake Trout	345.6	1.59	86.4	3.23	28.8	.60
All Other Fish	82.44	.38	5.2	.19	5.6	.11
Total	21,638.28	99.94	2,669.48	99.93	4,792.14	99.95

1 Comparison of Percentages of Total Numbers of Bones

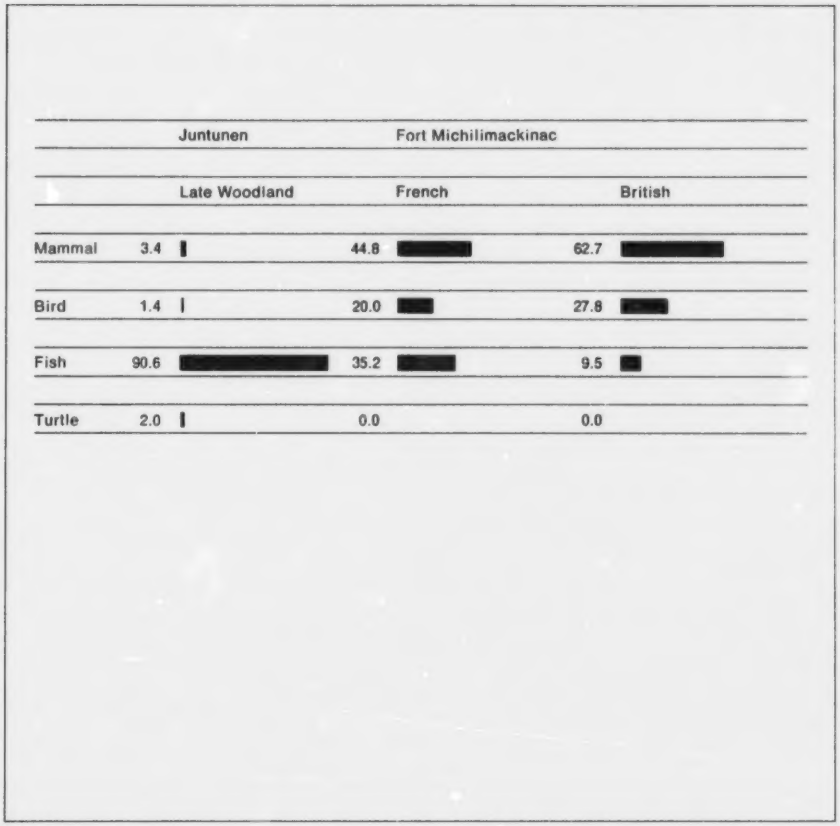


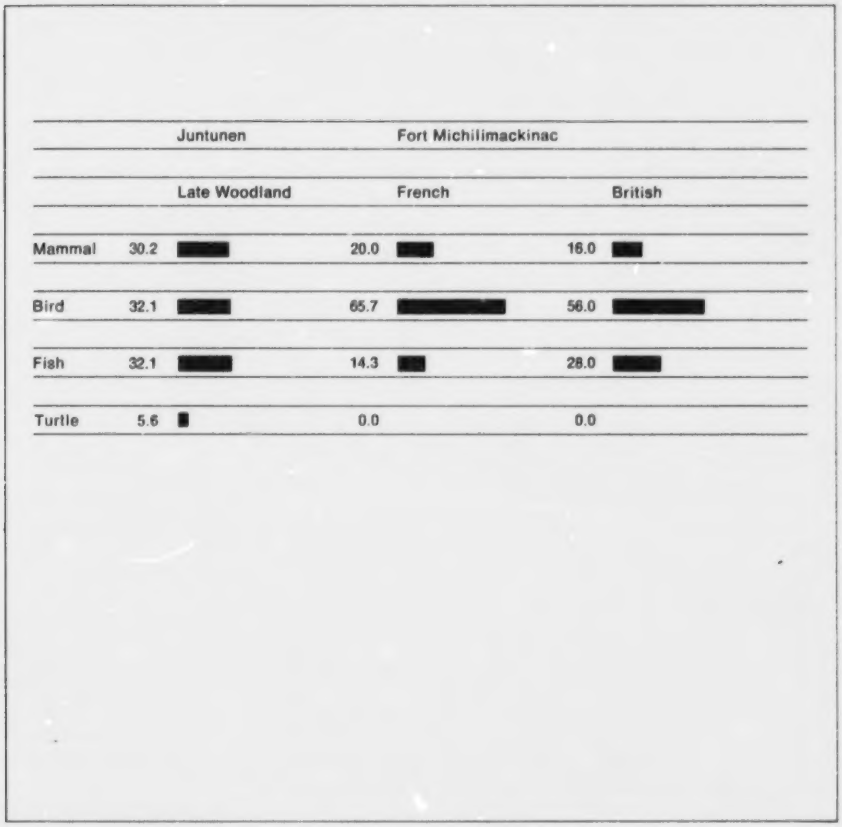
Figure 2 is an illustration of the percentages of the kinds of species representing each class of food species. This figure indicates that both the French and British seem to have been exploiting a wide variety of birds. The French, however, were killing proportionately more kinds of mammals, while the British were catching a greater variety of fish.

A third and more meaningful method of comparing the food remains of these occupations is in terms of the amount of meat which would be provided by the animals represented by the bone refuse. This method has the advantage of balancing out the bias which arises as the result of different bone frequencies and body weights of animals used for food. White (1953) developed a technique for making such calculations. His method consists of the multiplication of the pounds of usable meat obtainable from an average sized individual of a particular species by the minimum number of individuals of that species which are represented in the bone refuse. The use of White's technique, with some minor modification, resulted in the construction of Figure 3 (*see also* Appendices A, B, and C). Here we see that meat derived from mammals comprised the substantial part of meat consumed by both French and British. Birds and fish, on the other hand, actually contributed very little meat to the diet of either group. This point is, of course, extremely important and it would have been overlooked had only a simple bone count and/or a species list been used as the method of analysis. Aside from the information which would have been lost by using bone counts alone, it is very possible that the use of this method would have generated erroneous conclusions concerning the relative importance of animal species represented at Fort Michilimackinac. By using bone count alone, one would be forced to conclude that fish were an important source of food during the French occupation when in fact fish contributed less than ten per cent of all animal food. Similarly, if we used species counts alone, it would have been reasonable to conclude that birds were a primary factor in the subsistence systems of Fort Michilimackinac; in fact, fowl contributed less than four per cent of the meat acquired by the French and two per cent of the meat obtained by the British.

This criticism is not meant to imply that counting the number of species of birds represented in an archaeological site is not a useful piece of information. Such a figure may be indicative of rather important subsistence practices. Even though calculations based on pounds of meat may be the most meaningful for discussion of the over-all subsistence system, such figures are subject to misinterpretation. We must always remember that these calculations give no weight to other non-animal foods in the total diet. Presumably plant foods constituted the dietary staple in most Late Woodland and historic sites.

Before discussing the cultural variables which must have been largely responsible for the differences in the kinds of species utilized by the occupants of Fort Michilimackinac, it is necessary to present a more detailed accounting of the importance of various food species within the broad classes thus far discussed. Table 4 shows the proportion of meat derived from animals of various game categories. We have

2 Comparison of Percentages of Numbers of Species Represented by Bone Refuse



already observed that mammals provided 86.9 and 92.8 per cent of the meat from French and British occupations, respectively. Within this important food class, Table 4 shows that the amount of small game used by the French was of about the same proportion as the amount used by the British. Moreover, it is apparent that the French utilized much more big game than the British, who in turn used substantially more domestic animal foods than the French. Although fowl was never an important food source, it is interesting to note that the quantities of meat produced from various categories of wild fowl were consistently greater during the French period. The same statement may be made about the use of fish.

Although there are substantial differences in the subsistence patterns of the French and British occupations of Fort Michilimackinac, the kinds and proportions of food sources utilized by these two historic and essentially European societies are basically very similar when compared to the aboriginal subsistence pattern of the Straits of Mackinac area. The subsistence data from the Juntunen site is included in this study as an example of the type of subsistence pattern developed by a well-adapted, non-European culture of the Straits region at the time of first European contact. This site illustrates the fact that an economy very different from those of either the French or British was not only possible, but that in all probability such an economy was much better adapted to the available natural resources of the Straits.

The Juntunen site represents a summer phase of a Late Woodland subsistence system which includes both large summer fishing villages and small winter hunting camps (Cleland 1966). This settlement configuration is in large part due to the distribution of the available food supply. It would perhaps be more accurate to say the non-available food supply, since the mixed coniferous-hardwood forests of the area will not carry large herbivorous populations, and since the poor sandy soil and short growing season are not conducive to reliable agriculture. Fish was the only natural food which was both plentiful and reliable enough to support even seasonal population aggregates. Fish, particularly sturgeon and whitefish, were exploited by these Late Woodland peoples in great quantity when they became available during the spring and fall spawning periods. During the winter, when fish were not so plentiful, the villages disbanded and families scattered to the interior to hunt big game. To some extent, the Indians of the Straits of Mackinac were still practicing this type of subsistence pattern as late as the early 1760s when Alexander Henry described his sojourn with a Chippewa family in northern Michigan (Quimby 1962).

The Functional Integration of Subsistence Patterns

Figure 3 shows that while the people who occupied the Juntunen site exploited many more species of both fish and mammals than either the French or British, the European settlers of Fort Michilimackinac exploited a proportionately greater variety of fowl. This phenomenon is easily explained by the introduction of firearms and the use of these in fowling. Evidence for this activity is the high frequency of shot holes in the bird bone from Michilimackinac. The obvious implication of the presence of a wide range of food species in the Juntunen site is that the Indians had a much narrower margin of subsistence assurance than the white settlers. Unfortunately our language lacks a good descriptive term for the act of intensive foraging. If the Indians of the Straits area were forced to forage intensively to add a measure of economic security to their fish-based summer settlements, it seems inconceivable that the French and British could have maintained a larger permament population which was not based upon fish and which shows no evidence of foraging. Since big game, which the bone refuse leads us to believe was the most important source of meat, was not a reliable food resource in this region, the French and especially the British must have been relying to some extent on imported and storable foods. This fact accounts for the difference in the kinds and frequencies of animal bones found on aboriginal and historic sites.

A thorough analysis of any subsistence pattern must account for the functioning of this system within the context of the culture in which it operates. The generalized cultural patterns which characterized Fort Michilimackinac during its two periods of occupation were fundamentally different. Binford (1962) has pointed out some of the implicit cultural factors which influenced the structure of these societies.

While the French occupied Michilimackinac, the fort functioned primarily as a trading and mission center. The society of this establishment must have been a rather egalitarian one composed of a few soldiers, private traders and their wives (who were frequently Indian) and children. These residents were more or less isolated in the back country of New France at the end of a long and tenuous supply line extending from Montreal to Quebec, hundreds of miles to the east. As a result, these people had to be capable of surviving by their own devices.

The character of Michilimackinac was abruptly changed under British domination. Then the fort became a military garrison linked to other British army posts by a fairly well-developed line of supply and communication. The social interaction of the inhabitants was no longer based on egalitarian principles but was now highly stratified with a privileged class consisting of the officers and wealthy traders. The affluence of this society with its farms, storehouses and comparatively heavy marine traffic far outstripped the earlier French colony. When we can observe such remarkable differences in the technological, social and ideological systems of these two societies, it is logical to assume that differences in these systems would have resulted in significant differences in the subsistence patterns.

The statement has been made that the differences between the subsistence patterns of the aboriginal and historic occupations considered in this study result from the dependency of historic settlers on nonlocal storable foods. The availability of additional food resources seems to have been dependent upon three factors: (1) logistic support from the outside; (2) the ability or desire to produce foodstuffs locally, and (3) the availability of food through Indian trade channels.

Turning first to the French occupation, we can see at once from the food remains that these people were doing more foraging than the British; they were also more heavily dependent upon large wild game and less upon domestic species. This situation might be expected, since the French occupants were not strongly supported by supplies from the outside. A letter from De Beauharnois, Governor of New France, to the French Minister dated in 1745 gives us some clue to these problems.

I offered licenses for nothing – especially to Detroit, in order that there should be abundance of goods at that post – only ten went up this year: I was obliged to give seven of these licenses gratis, in return for conveying the effects of the Commandant and of the garrison [11,400 pounds according to a marginal note] which could not otherwise be carried up without great expense to his Majesty. I have not been able to find sale, either for the usual number of licenses for the post of Missilimakinac, to which place only nine canoes have gone, after considerable solicitation: for the same reasons that I have just had the honor to set forth, which apply equally to all the other leased posts; also to those of Niagara and Fort Frontenac, which are hardly better provided with goods necessary for the Indian trade there, and will be much less so next year, no supplies of any description having reached us this year (Thwaites 1906, 17: 449).

It is not surprising that the French at Michilimackinac were not utilizing many domestic animals, especially if one considers the difficulties of transporting a cow in a freight canoe. To supplement their diet, the French grew some crops (but probably with no great success), imported some domestic species such as the pig, and traded for food with the Indians. The Indian trade was probably a major food source, and the volume of such trade was no doubt par-

tially the result of kin ties with local populations. The Ottawas, for instance, complained to the governor of New France in 1742 that the Jesuit fathers of Michilimackinac took such a large percentage of the income of the indentured gunsmith, Amiot, that his Indian wife, Sakise, and their eight children were forced to come daily to the Ottawa camp to beg for food (Thwaites 1906, 17: 372-3). Although the exact volume of the Indian trade in foodstuffs is unknown, we have indications that it was carried on at a high level. La Potherie observed that "They [Saulteur] carry on an extensive traffic in this fish at Michilimackinac, where both the savages and the French buy it at a high price" (Blair 1911: 276). Elsewhere La Potherie refers to tribes such as the Huron and Ottawa who lived near Michilimackinac saying that:

They make a profit on everything. They catch whitefish, herring and trout four to five feet long. All the tribes land at this place, in order to trade their peltries there. In summer the young men go hunting, a distance of thirty to forty leagues, and return laden with game, in autumn they depart for the winter hunt . . . , and return in the spring laden with beavers pelts, various kinds of fat, and the flesh of bears and deer. They sell all of which they have more than enough. They would be exceedingly well-to-do if they were economical; but most of them have the same traits as the Sauteurs (Blair 1911: 282-3).

In addition to fish and game, the French bought corn from local Indian groups. La Potherie observed that these groups "reserve the slenderest provision of grain [for their families], and sell the rest at a high price" (Blair 1911: 281-2). In fact when the Ottawa of Michilimackinac tried to move to more productive farming country in the valley of the Muskegon, De Beauharnois, then Governor General of New France, tried to persuade them to find suitable lands near the fort. In part he said,

Choose, My Children, that one of all those Places that Suits you, and reflect well upon the matter. Remember the advantages you have enjoyed in Being near the French, who buy your Canoes, your gum, your indian corn, your fats and all that your industry produces; this enables you to live more Comfortably with your families, and you would not enjoy those advantages if you Were far Away from them (Thwaites 1906, 17: 352).

It thus seems apparent that the French inhabitants of Fort Michilimackinac were largely living off the land by hunting, fishing and trading with the Indians, but nonetheless a great margin of economic security was provided by domestic stock, gardening and imported foods.

When we look at the variety of species, number of species and the meat provided by the animals represented by British food remains, it is immediately evident that the British were not heavily dependent on local food sources. The meat of domestic species such as pig, cow and sheep all but replaced wild game meats such as the moose and bear. Table 4, which was constructed from Appendices A, B, and C, shows that while the French obtained roughly one-third of their meat from domestic animals and slightly less than one-half from big game, the British obtained more than three-fourths of their meat from domestic stock and less than one-tenth from big game. The greater use of domestic species seems to be due primarily to the development of a better transport system and may be considered as both a matter of convenience and economy.

The economic aspects become apparent if we calculate the average amount of meat provided by the large animals killed by peoples of the three occupations involved. Each mammal killed by Juntunen people, who had no large domestic species, produced an average of 99 pounds of usable meat; each large animal killed by the French produced about 144 pounds of meat on the average while those large mammals killed by the British produced 164 pounds of meat. These figures demonstrate the advantage of keeping domestic stock.

The heavy traffic of sailing vessels on the Lakes during the British period of occupation brought not only more livestock but a much greater quantity of other foreign foodstuffs to Fort Michilimackinac. The papers of John Askin, a wealthy British trader who lived at Michilimackinac from 1768 to 1780, are filled with numerous references to the importation of such livestock as horses, oxen, pigs, sheep, and preserved foods such as barrels of salt pork, and beef, peas, hominy, rum, tea, sugar, cheese, butter and thousands of pounds of flour and corn. Even so, the volume of goods and material imported was inadequate, especially in winter. In April 1778, John Askin wrote:

I am informed from Detroit that it (corn) will cost 24/ the Bushell Unhulled & without Bags, but thats not the worst how to get it here now the Vessells are Stopt, the Kings Vessell will come as usual perhaps, but besides Kings Stores, she has to carry for so many persons, that each can have very little on Board. I myself could [load] her twice. . . (Askin 1928: 74).

Askin also notes at one point that the fort's flour store had gone bad during the winter and that he had "2,000 weight" of flour made into bread for himself and the garrison's officers. In the same context he observes that:

My own family consists of about 20 persons always, none of which I assure you is accustomed to live without bread nor ever Shall as far as in my power to prevent it, & I really should think it very hard even to be put on the footing of the Inhabitants of Detroit, many of which seldom eat Bread (Askin 1928: 105).

The less wealthy citizens and soldiers of Fort Michilimackinac were even less fortunate.

Even the intermittent supply network of the British was far superior to that of the French in that it not only brought more food more often but also the means of producing food. John Askin, in fact, started a farm on which he grew, or tried to grow, peas, onions, beans, squash, cucumbers, spinach, pumpkins, cabbage, turnips, parsley, lettuce, carrots, beets, potatoes, corn, rye, buckwheat and oats. Askin's success in this venture was probably quite limited be-

cause of the short growing season and poor soil, but at least the available food supply must have been implemented by some of these locally grown crops.

The proportional rise in the volume of imported foods and the added ability to produce more food locally must have acted to decrease reliance upon wild game and foods obtained from the Indians. In fact, by the last few years of the British occupation, the loss of local Indian hunters due to acculturation and the depletion of local game populations resulted in the virtual abandonment of the Indian food trade. In June of 1779, Major De Peyster, commandant of Fort Michilimackinac, brought this fact to the attention of his superior, General Haldimand.

I am sorry to acquaint your Excellency that the scheme by supplying the Troops here with anything but store provisions is impracticable, the taking of fish is too precarious most of what they (fishing details) take now I supply the Indians with. And as to the Indian meat there are not five carcasses of any kind brought to this Port in the course of a year. Formerly there used to be more, but there are fewer animals, and the Indians since the beginning of the War are become very idle, even in the hunting Season. I am obliged to help to maintain all who live within fifty or sixty miles of this place, were it not for the sugar in the spring many would starve. If purchased a dried carcass or two is brought from afar in the Spring, the buyer pays at the rate of two shillings per pound (Michigan. Historical Comm. 1886, 9: 383).

During the British period hunting for game, particularly water fowl and passenger pigeon, seems to have taken on a sports-like quality and become more a profitable pastime than a serious economic pursuit.

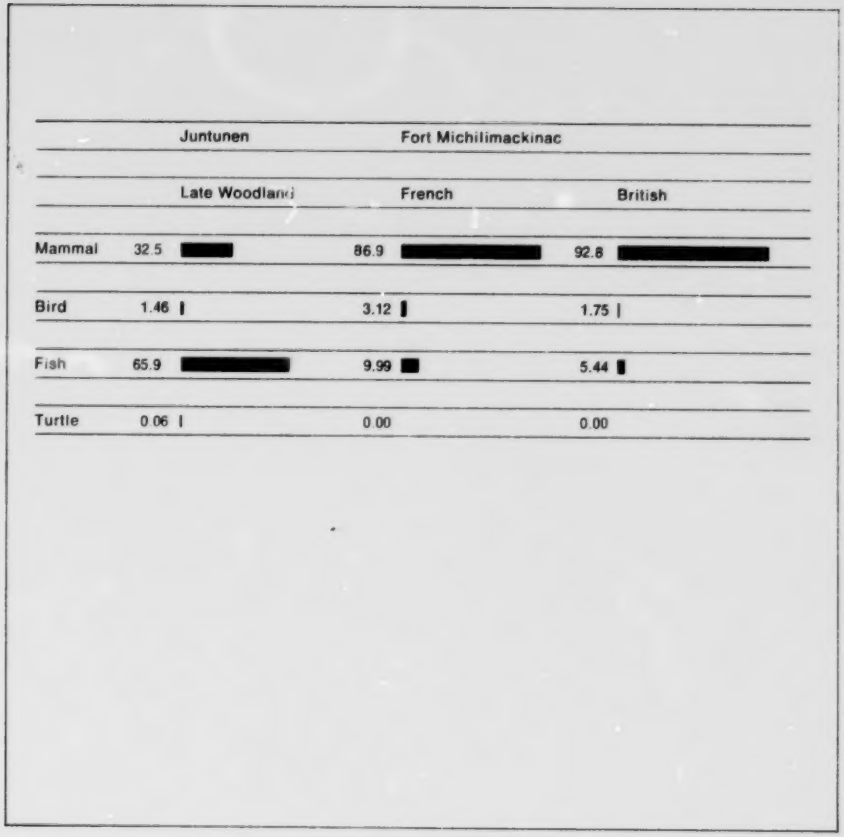
Just as the different technologies and social structures of the French and British occupants of Fort Michilimackinac had their influences on the types of subsistence patterns which emerged during these periods, so must have the attitudes and beliefs of these people influenced the kinds of foods which they consumed. For instance, religious dietary regulations, such as the use of fish on meat fasting days, may be an important factor in determining how much of one kind of food or another was consumed. The Catholic population of the French fort may therefore have consumed more fish per capita than the predominantly Protestant British.

Another perhaps more significant but less easily defined set of attitudes which set apart the French and British occupations of Michilimackinac was the way in which the people of these cultures related to their homelands. May (1963) points out that the old concept of Michilimackinac being a crude frontier outpost whose inhabitants had few, if any, comforts of life did not apply to everyone who lived there. The British trader, John Askin, for instance, boasted that his wife and daughter wore the latest London fashions, while he himself was carried about in a sedan chair borne by his two Negro slaves, Jupiter and Pompey. Certainly Askin felt himself a part of wider circles than those imposed by the fort's stockade. The same can be said for the British military establishment whose officers and men were, no doubt, all familiar with the streets of London. In short, the British of Michilimackinac were "transplanted Englishmen," men who must have preferred roast beef, salt pork, biscuits and Bristol beer to spruce beer, moose, sagamity and corn gruel. Fortunately, the British logistic system was sophisticated enough to gratify most of these food preferences.

The French residents of Mackinac could not maintain such exotic food preferences. Moreover, it is probable that most of the French inhabitants, whether immigrants from France or French Canada, were not accustomed to fare much different from what was available to them at Michilimackinac. Few, if any, of the French of Michilimackinac came from the high strata of French society. While the British were seeking to maintain or to imitate the traditions of contemporary England, the French did not display such tendencies. They were, in essence, French peasants being French peasants at Michilimackinac. The artifacts from the houses of French traders and soldiers clearly indicate that these people were not participating in the mainstream of French culture. It is not, therefore, logical to expect that the French at Michilimackinac longed for *coq au vin* or *crêpes suzette*, but were probably quite satisfied with the foods provided by themselves and their Indian compatriots.

Conclusions

3 Comparison of Percentages of Pounds of Meat Estimated from Bone Refuse



This study was designed to explore the subsistence patterns of three distinct cultures and to contrast the type of pattern which developed in each society. Such an approach requires that the subsistence pattern of each culture be investigated within the context of the culture of which it is a part. The entire network of relationships which link subsistence activities to other cultural activities provides the internal ordering which constitutes the subsistence pattern.

By assuming that the natural resources available in the Straits of Mackinac region remained essentially constant through time, it has been possible to attribute differences in the French and British subsistence patterns to differences in the cultures themselves. Both the French and British subsistence patterns differed from the one at the pre-contact Juntunen site because they were primarily supported by imported foods. The French subsistence scheme differed from the British in the quantity of imported food available. Since the French supply system was relatively small and intermittent, the French exploited a great many more local food resources than the British. While the efficiency of the logistic network which brought food and supplies to Fort Michilimackinac was of primary importance in the type of subsistence pattern developed by these historic societies, other factors have also been considered. Some of these include differences in social and political structure, relations with local populations, and contrasting ideologies. All of these factors were important in determining the type of subsistence patterns developed by each culture.

Appendix A: Amount of Meat Provided by Species Represented at the Juntunen Site

Species	No. Ind.	Live Wt./Ind.	% Usable Meat	Usable Meat/Ind.	Total Meat
Beaver	46	45.0	70	31.5	1,449.0
Dog	31	30.0	50	15.0	465.0
Snowshoe Hare	18	3.0	70	2.1	37.8
Chipmunk	8				
Deer Mouse	23				
Otter	7	18.0	70	12.6	88.2
Moose	7	800.0	50	400.0	2,800.0
Porcupine	5	10.0	70	7.0	35.0
Caribou	3	375.0	50	187.5	562.5
Black Bear	6	300.0	70	210.0	1,260.0
Redbacked Vole	5				
Deer	4	170.0	50	85.0	340.0
Bog Lemming	2				
Red Squirrel	1				
Marten	1	3.0	70	2.1	2.1
Muskrat	1	3.0	70	2.1	2.1
Mink	1	1.5	70	1.05	1.05
Total Mammal					7,042.25
Bald Eagle	12	10	80	8.0	96.0
Loon	20	5	80	4.0	80.0
Passenger Pigeon	17	1.0	80	0.8	13.6
Raven	10	3.0	80	2.4	24.0
Turkey	6	12.0	80	9.6	57.6
Ringed-Billed Gull	3	2.5	80	2.0	6.0
Canada Goose	4	8.0	80	6.4	25.6
Crow	2	2.0	80	1.6	3.2
Blue Jay	1	0.8	80	0.64	.6
Goldeneye	1	2.0	80	1.6	1.6
Songbird	1				
Ruffed Grouse	2	1.3	80	1.1	2.2
Caspian Tern	1	2.0	80	1.6	1.6
Barred Owl	1	2.5	80	2.0	2.0
Goshawk	1	2.0	70	1.4	1.4
Saw Whet Owl	1				
Red Shouldered Hawk	1	2.5	70	1.75	1.75
Total Birds					317.39
Trout	2				
Sturgeon	350	45	80	36	12,600
Whitefish	119	13	80	10.4	237.6
Walleye	14	7	80	5.6	39.2
Lake Trout	24	18	80	14.4	345.6
Longnose Gar	7	2.0	80	1.6	11.2
Longnose Sucker	7	.5	80	.4	2.8
White Sucker	5	.5	80	.4	2.0
Yellow Perch	5	.3	80	.24	1.2
Largemouth Bass	4	2.0	80	1.6	6.4
Drum	4	2.0	80	1.6	6.4
Silver Redhorse	1	.2	80	.16	.16
Northern Redhorse	1	.3	80	.24	.24
Channel Catfish	2	4.0	80	3.2	6.4
Northern Pike	2	3.0	80	2.4	4.8
Brown Bullhead	1	.5	80	.4	.4
Rock Bass	1	.3	80	.24	.24
Minnow	1				
Surger	1	.5	80	.4	.4
Total Fish					14,265.04
Painted Turtle	6	2.0	20	.4	2.4
Blandings Turtle	3	2.0	20	.4	1.2
Snapping Turtle	1	50	20	10	10.0
Total Turtles					13.6
Grand Total					23,866.57

Appendix B: Amount of Meat Provided by Species From French Period Refuse Pits of Fort Michilimackinac

Species	No. Ind.	Live Wt./Ind.	% Usable Meat	Usable Meat/Ind.	Total Meat
Snowshoe Hare	1	3.0	70	2.1	2.1
Beaver	7	45.0	70	31.5	220.5
Muskrat	1	3.0	70	2.1	2.1
Black Bear	2	300.0	70	210.0	420.0
Marten	1	3.0	70	2.1	2.1
Moose	2	800.0	50	400.0	800.0
Pig	5	245.0	70	171.5	857.5
Dog	1	30.0	50	15.0	15.0
Total Mammal					2,319.3
Pied-Billed Grebe	1	1.5	80	1.2	1.2
Great Blue Heron	2	6.0	80	4.8	9.6
Canada Goose	1	8.0	80	6.4	6.4
Mallard Duck	3	2.5	80	2.0	6.0
Green-Wing Teal	2	0.9	80	0.7	1.4
Blue-Wing Teal	1	0.9	80	0.7	0.7
Wood Duck	2	1.5	80	1.2	2.4
Redhead Duck	4	2.5	80	2.0	8.0
Ring-Neck Duck	2	1.8	80	1.5	3.0
Lesser Scaup	1	1.9	80	1.6	1.6
Bufflehead	1	1.0	80	0.8	0.8
Hooded Merganser	1	1.5	80	1.2	1.2
Common Merganser	1	3.0	80	2.4	2.4
Red-Breasted Merganser	2	2.5	80	2.0	4.0
Goshawk	2	2.0	70	1.4	2.8
Cooper's Hawk	1	2.5	70	1.75	1.75
Ruffed Grouse	2	1.3	80	1.1	2.2
Black-Bellied Plover	1	0.3	80	0.24	0.24
Herring Gull	1	3.0	80	2.4	2.4
Ring-Billed Gull	1	2.5	80	2.0	2.0
Passenger Pigeon	21	1.0	80	0.8	16.9
Raven	1	3.0	80	2.4	2.4
Chicken	1	2.8	80	2.24	2.24
Total Bird					81.68
Sturgeon	4	45	80	36	144.0
Lake Trout	6	18	80	14.4	86.4
Whitefish	3	13	80	10.4	31.2
Channel Catfish	1	4	80	3.2	3.2
Burbot	1	2.5	80	2.0	2.0
Total Fish					266.80
Grand Total					2,667.78

Appendix C: Amcunt of Meat Provided by Species From British Period Refuse Pits of Fort Michilimackinac

Species	No. Ind.	Live Wt./Ind.	% Usable Meat	Usable Meat/Ind.	Total Meat
Snowshoe Hare	3	3.0	70	2.1	6.3
Beaver	8	45.0	70	31.5	252.0
Porcupine	2	10	70	7.0	14.0
Black Bear	2	300.0	70	210.0	420.0
Cow	4	1,000.0	50	500.0	2,000.0
Pig	10	245	70	171.5	1,715.0
Sheep	1	80	50	40	40
Cat	1				
Total Mammal					4,504.0
Loon	1	5	80	4.0	4.0
Double crested Cormorant	1	5	80	4.0	4.0
Whistling Swan	1	12	80	9.6	9.6
Canada Goose	1	8.0	80	6.4	6.4
Mallard Duck	2	2.5	80	2.0	4.0
Redhead Duck	1	0.9	80	0.7	.7
Hooded Merganser	1	1.5	80	1.2	1.2
Ruffed Grouse	1	1.3	80	1.1	1.1
Herring Gull	2	3.0	80	2.4	4.8
Passenger Pigeon	22	1.0	80	0.8	17.6
Bluejay	1	0.8	80	0.6	0.6
Raven	2	3.0	80	2.4	4.8
Domestic Turkey	2	12.0	80	9.6	19.2
Chicken	1	2.8	80	2.24	2.24
Total Bird					80.24
Sturgeon	6	45	80	36	216.0
Lake Trout	2	18	80	14.4	28.8
Whitefish	1	13	80	10.4	10.4
Walleye	1	7	80	5.6	5.6
Total Fish					260.80
Grand Total					4,845.04

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The French in Gaspé, 1534 to 1760

by David Lee

Abstract

The early history of the Gaspé peninsula is examined in the light of its importance to the history of the French Empire. The distinctive economic development, based almost entirely on the cod fisheries, is traced from the early 1600s to the middle of the 18th century. Five communities are discussed in detail, and the economic relationship of the Gaspé to Quebec and the mother country is considered.

Part I The Background

Various explanations have been suggested for the origin of the name Gaspé and, as Dr. W. F. Ganong and others have concluded,[1] it probably derives from a Micmac word meaning "land's end." Originally this seems to have referred to the prominent rocky cape which is the first land seen upon making the southeast approach to the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The name is probably Micmac because these Indians are believed to have inhabited the shores surrounding the Bay of Gaspé when this area became a popular French fishing ground in the late 16th century. When Jacques Cartier visited the bay in 1534, the Indians he found there were Iroquoian and on his second voyage, a year later, he called the cape "Honguedo." Perhaps this was the Iroquoian name for the region adopted by previous European visitors, for Cartier does not indicate that it was he who gave it that name. The cape continued to be called Honguedo (in various spellings) for 50 years. For some time it was believed that the name "Gaspé" had been in use in Cartier's time but this was due to a misleading statement by Richard Hakluyt in his English edition (1600) of the *Cosmographie* of Jean Alfonse (Roberval's pilot in 1542). Here he interpolated the phrase "Bay of Molues, or Gaspay" into Alfonse's account of his journey to America, replacing his original "La baye de Onguedo." Alfonse's sketch map of the area says, "Terre Unguedor."[2] André Thevet, writing about 1586, also talks about "Le Cap de Ognedor."[3]

Towards the end of the 16th century, the region was occupied or re-occupied by Micmacs and the name "Gaspé" replaced "Honguedo" in general use by visiting fishermen. The earliest known use of the name is in 1599; it is in a contract loaning money to a La Rochelle shipping outfitter to provision a ship being sent to Newfoundland and "aux Ysles de Gaschepé" to fish and trade in furs.[4] In 1600 "C[ape] Gaspei" appeared on a map by Pierre Berthius. In 1601 "b. gaspi" and "gaspay" appeared on Levasseur's world map.[5] And in May, 1603, Samuel de Champlain "sighted Gachepé, a very high land, and began to enter the river of Canada."[6]

The name Gaspé can refer in general to the Bay of Gaspé, the Cape of Gaspé (later usually called "le Forillon," however) as well as to the entire Gaspé Peninsula. Some people prefer to use the old (at least as old as Chrétien LeClercq, 1691) but more literary "Gaspésia" with reference to the entire region or peninsula, but in this study the more familiar "Gaspé" will be used when talking about the entire region.

Gaspé as a region possessed a very definite economic unity during the French regime. One species of fish, the cod, dominates the history of Gaspé throughout this period and gives it its historical unity. Cod was found as far up the coast of the St. Lawrence River as Matane[7] and extended around the peninsula almost to the Restigouche River. There must also be included in Gaspé the islands of Bonaventure and Percé (the "Ysles de Gaschepé" of 1599) and such offshore cod fishing grounds as the Orphan Banks.

As R. G. Trotter has illustrated,[8] Gaspé was part of the famous Appalachian barrier which had such a profound effect on the history of the English colonies by limiting their settlement to the Atlantic seaboard for so long. Trotter does not pursue the Canadian analogy but the Gaspé Peninsula was certainly a large barrier for ships to circumnavigate between Acadia and Canada and this discouraged shipping and trade (for example, in fish) between these two regions of New France.[9] But most historians of New France ignore Gaspé altogether, perhaps due to scanty historical documentation. Marcel Trudel claims that in New France, the eastern limit of Canada was at Rimouski, and his definition of Acadia does not include Gaspé either.[10]

Gaspé was more than an empty no-man's land between Acadia and Canada and more than an obstacle to communication between the two. The Gaspé barrier itself experienced an historical development. By the 1750s it had a population of 500 to 600 permanent settlers. Its importance to France is also indicated by the hundreds of fishermen who came there to fish and cure their cod every summer. Cod not only provided Gaspé with its unity but also with its distinctiveness. Perhaps the history of Gaspé as a region is similar to that of Newfoundland, but it is certainly distinct from the history of Acadia and Canada.

We shall examine, then, the distinctiveness of Gaspé as an historical unit and its place in the French Empire.

It was from the voyage of Giovanni de Verrazano in 1524 that first came the name "Nova Gallia" or "New France." This was claimed to cover a large part of the Atlantic Coast of the New World. Ten years later Jacques Cartier landed in Gaspé Bay and raised a cross bearing, in relief, three fleurs-de-lis and the words "Vive le Roy de France." When a Micmac chief protested that "all this region belonged to him," Cartier assured him that the cross was meant only "to serve as a landmark and guidepost on coming into the harbour."[1] Some scholars feel, however, that this simple act formally claimed the land for France. Henceforth the French considered Acadia, Gaspé and the St. Lawrence to be French and handed out authorizations to settle the land and trade in furs. In 1623, Brother Gabriel Sagard landed at Gaspé Bay and took "possession of that land for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ;" but he was claiming it not from the Micmacs but from "Satan and his imps."[2]

Although we have no population estimates, the Micmacs were probably not very numerous in Gaspé. Despite the rugged topography they lived a seasonally nomadic life. In winter they moved into the woods where they hunted beaver, otter, moose, deer, bear and caribou. The rest of the year they lived on the seashore, especially at the mouths of rivers where they hunted seal, birds, eels, fish and shellfish. The area was sacred to the Micmac for a legend claims that it was at the mouth of the Restigouche River that God created man. At the same time God gave Gaspé to his new creation.[3]

After Cartier, however, no thought was given to Indian claims and the Indians never did challenge the French intrusion. While by these presumptuous French declarations the Indians may have lost (by European legal standards) their landed heritage to the French, in reality they never felt this loss during the French regime. The French in Gaspé were basically interested in exploiting the fishing resources of the coasts and never ventured inland. Nevertheless, Indian life in Gaspé was affected in all the other lamentable ways that Indians throughout the New World suffered through contact with Europeans. It was the fur trade which had permanently attached the Indians to Europeans in New France, but in Gaspé the fur trade was only a sideline to fishing. As a result, the faunal staples of the Indians were probably not depleted as badly or as noticeably as elsewhere. There was, however, some trade in furs, and inevitably and irrevocably even this occasional trade altered the Indians' way of life and they became irresistibly dependent on European technology. The difference was that the process of acculturation was much more gradual in Gaspé than it was, for example, in Acadia or Canada.

Another reason that the rate of acculturation was slower here than elsewhere was that Christian missionaries were not as active in Gaspé as in other parts of New France. There were Recollets at Percé from about 1675 to 1690. There was also a secular priest at Pabos, Grand-Rivière for a few years in the 1750s, but he did not seem to be interested in proselytizing Indians. Nor were the Indians ever drawn into European conflicts in Gaspé because all military activity in this area was naval.

The Indians of this harsh land were never very populous. They had a village of perhaps 100 souls at the mouth of the Restigouche River,[4] an area which few French ever had occasion to visit. In winter the Indians withdrew into the woods to hunt, but it was hunting for subsistence purposes, not for furs to trade. So, while Europeans fought and killed one another for this land, the Micmacs continued to roam the more remote areas of Gaspé, never feeling threatened enough to attempt resisting the European intrusion.

The French, however, were continually faced with intrusive challenges from other Europeans like the English and the Scots, and even with quarrels among themselves. Nearly every armed conflict involving the French in America was felt in Gaspé. In some cases the only effect felt was the arrival of refugees: in 1613 the English captured Port Royal and sent a group of French in boats to Gaspé where they found French fishing ships to return them to France.[5] The internecine war in Acadia involving Daulnay, Denys and LaTour was felt even in Gaspé, for in 1650, one of Mme. Daulnay's ships was seized there.[6] But more important were the occasions when Gaspé changed hands, whether on paper or through outright conquest.

In 1621, Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, convinced James I, King of England and Scotland, of the need to establish a New Scotland to compare with New England and New France. For this purpose, Alexander was granted an immense territory including Acadia and Gaspé. He never succeeded in planting a permanent colony on his grant, but his claim was temporarily solidified in 1629 when England conquered all of New France.

In 1628, four vessels bound for Quebec with 400 colonists (France's best colonizing effort yet) were forced to land in the Bay of Gaspé. The commander, Claude de Roquemont, had heard that the English under David Kirke controlled the St. Lawrence. In Gaspé, de Roquemont lightened his ships by unloading some of his cargo. Despite the war with England, France had sent the expedition without a naval escort, so when de Roquemont eventually left the bay to try to reach Quebec, all his ships were taken by Kirke. Kirke destroyed the French cargo stored at Gaspé but took two of the French ships back to England and there joined with Alexander to finance another expedition which took Quebec in 1629. By this time peace had been agreed upon in Europe but New France was not returned until 1632. Emery de Caen was named commandant of New France and sent to reclaim the colony, landing in Gaspé Bay on 6 June, and at Quebec a month later.[7]

Other wars in Europe, including that between William III (of Orange) and Louis XIV, seriously affected New France and Gaspé in particular. In August, 1690, two corsairs, most likely authorized by the colony of New York, pillaged and destroyed the ships, fish, missions and villages on îles Percé

and Bonaventure. The residents who had fled into the forests returned but had to flee again a month later, escaping to Quebec by *chaloupe*, on the approach of the expedition being led against Quebec by Sir William Phips. Phips destroyed the tiny settlement at Petite-Rivière (in Baie-des-Morues) but failed to take Quebec.[8]

It was many years before the French again tried to plant permanent settlements in Gaspé. French fishing vessels occasionally visited Gaspé during the next 23 years of almost constant war and many were captured. There was peace in 1697, but only five years later difficulties in Europe over the succession to the Spanish throne saw England and France on opposite sides again. In 1711, an immense expedition led by Sir Hovenden Walker was sent to seize Quebec in reprisal for Franco-Indian raids. There was little in Gaspé to attract Walker to stop and destroy en route, but bad weather forced him to take refuge in the Bay of Gaspé anyhow. Here he found only one French fishing vessel, which he burned. Soon the flotilla sailed on to its doom on the rocks of Egg Island in the St. Lawrence, far distant from Quebec. The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) provided the French with 30 years of peace to resume development of Canada and Gaspé, but now they had lost most of Newfoundland and Acadia. The treaty was unclear as to the limits of Acadia, and while the French claimed that it ended at Chignecto, some English considered it to extend to Cap-des-Rosiers. The Council of Nova Scotia reported in 1732 that

Ever Since the french were drove out of Canso . . . They have settled a Great fishery at Cape Gaspy in his Majestys Dominions, Where they have Been unmolested for these several years past; and if they are Not Speedily Drove from thence, they May in time so fortify themselves as to Dispute a Great part of his Majestys Territories in the Bay of St. Lawrence . . . which if permitted, will Consequently affect the trade and Navigation of Great Britain.[9]

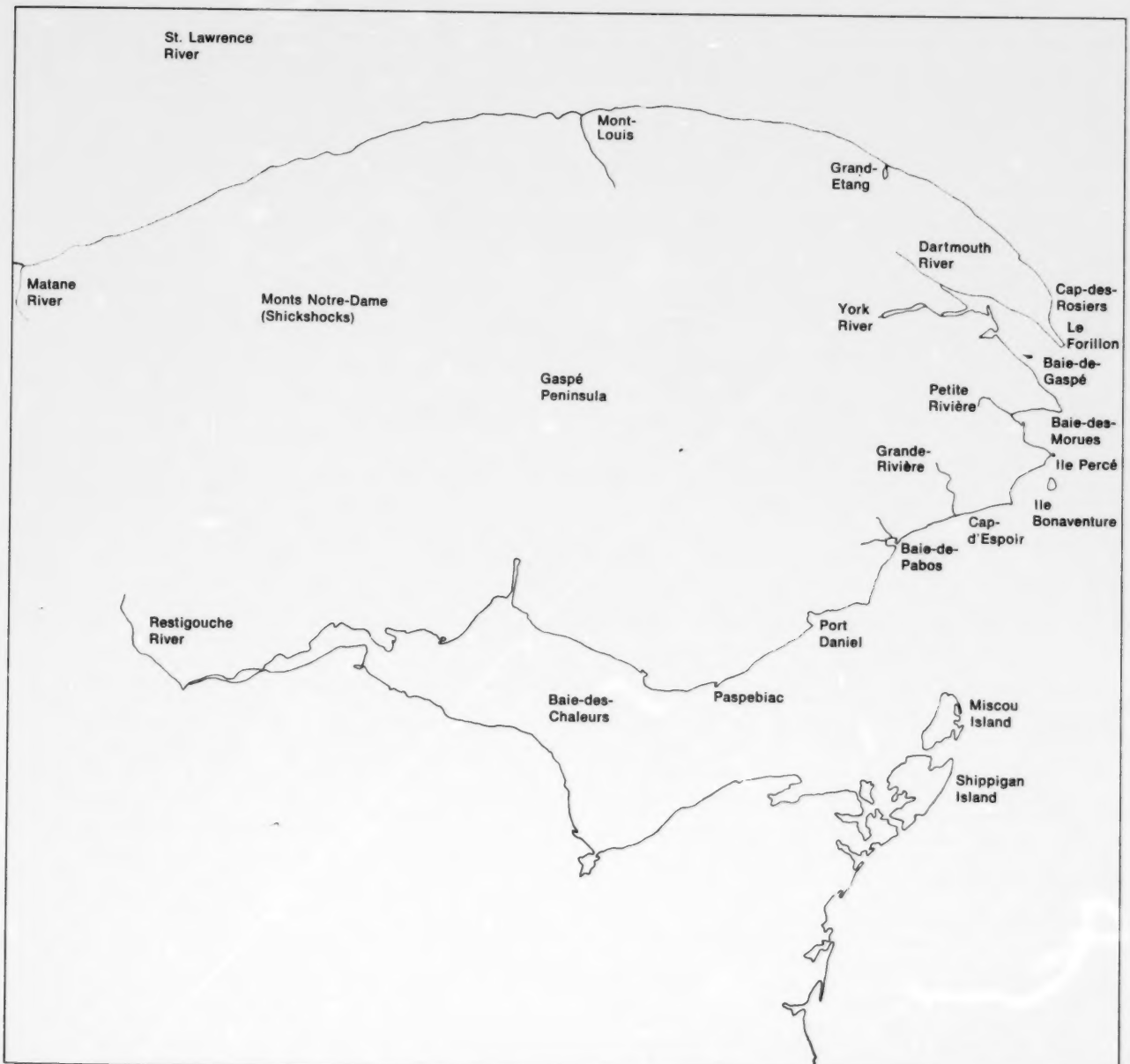
As is particularly evident during the War of the Austrian Succession (1744-48), the fisheries of Gaspé were envied by New England and regarded as an important consideration for going to war again with France.[10] Conquest, however, necessitated destruction of the very sedentary fisheries themselves and, as Father LeClercq noted, the Indians of Gaspé observed this European madness for cod with great amusement.[11] But unlike Indians in other European colonies, those of Gaspé were never enticed or forced into participating in the hunt for cod or in the wars for it. Although steadily becoming dependent on European manufactured goods through their occasional fur trade, and although it was their land for which the Europeans were fighting, the Indians felt no threat to their land or their lives and were able to remain aloof.

In the 1720s, the French began the great fortress at Louisbourg to protect the Gulf of St. Lawrence shipping entrance to Canada and at the same time they came to realize the strategic importance of Gaspé. Although they did not erect fortifications at Gaspé during the war of 1744-48 and the Seven Years' War, they maintained a vigilant lookout there to forewarn Quebec of the approach of English ships. The inhabitants of Gaspé could never hold out against a true invasion without soldiers and fortifications and the settlements there easily fell to Wolfe coming from Louisbourg in 1758. Wolfe leveled the growing fishing establishments at Grande-Rivière, Pabos, Gaspé Bay and Mont-Louis, destroyed 36,000 quintals (hundredweight) of fish and transported hundreds of settlers to France.

This time the English would keep Gaspé: it would not be returned to the French or left to the Indians. By 1760, Acadian refugees had gathered at the mouth of the Restigouche. They were joined by a French flotilla which had come to relieve the siege of Canada but had arrived too late: it was subsequently destroyed by the English. This was the last French resistance to English domination.[12] Many Acadians stayed and multiplied on the south shore but many also moved northward along the coast. Here they were joined by several families which had lived in Gaspé before the Conquest. By 1765, there were over 200 Europeans settled on the south shore and over 100 at Gaspé Bay – already a third of them were English.[13] Within a few years the European population was swelled by fishermen from Jersey and Guernsey and by Loyalists from the United States. Gaspé then became unmistakably European; jurisdictionally British, and socially English and French.

But to whom does Gaspé really belong? The Royal Proclamation of 8 October 1763 guaranteed the Indians possession of such land "as not having been ceded to or purchased by Us [i.e., the Crown]."[14] The Indians of Gaspé never ceded or sold any land to the Crown, nor were they ever conquered. Today they live on two small reserves on the Bay of Chaleurs.[15]

1 Map of the Gaspé peninsula.



"Gaspé is a country full of mountains, woods and rock," wrote Father Chrétien LeClercq in 1691.[1] The peninsula is dominated by a wild, mountainous topography which, although sloping more gently towards the sea on the southern side, is no less heavily forested there. In the French regime the mountains were called "les Monts Notre-Dame," noticed by Cartier in 1535 but first mentioned by name by Jean Alfonse in 1542.[2] These mountains, rising as high as 4,100 feet, are now also known as the Shickshocks. As in the English seaboard colonies, this branch of the Appalachians confined European settlement for a long time to the coasts of the peninsula. On the northern coast, Europeans sought out the narrow, postglacial marine terraces which are occasionally found between the sea and the mountains. On the eastern and southern coasts, the mountains slope down to the sea more gently allowing a broader choice of suitable land for settlement.

Terraces, beaches and gentle slopes were necessary for settlement and fish drying but other features, such as good harbours, were also necessary. The only good harbour was in the Bay of Gaspé where scores of ships of any size could anchor sheltered by high land on two sides. Ships bound for the St. Lawrence often sought out the Bay of Gaspé for fresh water and refuge from storms after a long Atlantic crossing. But even the Bay of Gaspé had its bad points: to leave the bay, ships often had to wait for long periods for favourable winds,[3] and in spring it was frequently choked with ice for long periods. Other harbours along the coast were formed by lagoons or *barachois* at the ends of rivers. The sandbars which formed such lagoon harbours as Matane and Pabos were naturally lower-lying than the surrounding cliffs of the Bay of Gaspé but at the same time allowed only small vessels to enter even at high tide. Fishing at these places was usually carried on in small *chaloupes* owned by local resident fishermen or by French fishermen who had carried them on board ship from Europe. In the latter case, the larger ships would anchor unprotected in the deep water off shore. This was the case at îles Percé and Bonaventure where there was no natural harbour even for *chaloupes*.[4] Here *chaloupes* were simply drawn up on the beach. The best beaches or *graves* for drying fish consist of shingly stones which allow air to move freely under and over the cod as they lie on the rough rocks. If the beach were more sandy than shingly, or in a harbour too protected from the wind, it was necessary to construct flakes *(vignaux)* on which the cod would be placed to dry.

Cod are caught in shallow water known as "banks" extending from Labrador to Cape Cod; they range from 5 to 10 pounds on the coastal or near-coastal banks and up to 200 pounds on the larger banks. Cod feed principally on herring and capelin and in spring they follow these fish as they migrate from deep water to the banks where they spawn in summer. Rich in protein, they have been a staple for Europeans for centuries.

There were four major fishing banks which Gaspé fishermen worked. Only one of these is directly off the Gaspé coast but the others are not far away. The only coastal bank is actually a shallow extension of the mainland: today it is called *Le Banc des Americains* and is an underwater extension of Cape Gaspé, Pointe Saint-Pierre, Cap-d'Espoir and the îles Percé and Bonaventure protuberance. South of this is *Le Banc de Miscou* which is a similar extension of the low-lying Shippegan-Miscou peninsula stretching north from New Brunswick towards Gaspé. Sitting offshore in the Gulf of St. Lawrence is the famous *Banc de l'Orphelin*. It is a shallow platform, only about 30 fathoms deep, raised above the ocean floor and rich in cod. On the north coast, the shallow underwater terrace where cod can be found is very narrow. Gaspé fishermen did fish these waters but also frequented a bank which lies off the west and northwest coasts of Anticosti Island.

The climate of Gaspé is more akin to that of the St. Lawrence Valley than to those of Acadia or Newfoundland. Precipitation, for example, is evenly distributed throughout the year. Winters are perhaps slightly tempered by Gaspé's maritime location but they are still extremely long, snow often lasting six months; and there is little difference in winter on the south shore even though it is washed by the waters of the Bay of Chaleurs. Cartier, who named the bay, visited it in July when, it is true, the south shore is warmer. It is warmer in spring, too, for the north coast suffers from a cold, damp northeast wind from April to June.[5]

The peculiar geography of the peninsula contributed to Gaspé's distinctive history. The difficult terrain retarded agriculture, restricted fur trading and prevented the search for minerals. The land is so wild that in 1661, when the Iroquois threat was particularly strong, some Indians friendly to the French moved to the Matane area: they felt that this country was so "ill-favoured and forbidding" that if they did not starve, at least the Iroquois would never find them.[6] There was very little communication by land. Although Indians apparently used an overland route by the rivers Restigouche, Matapédia and Matane[7] there is no indication that Europeans ever used it. The English did march a military force along the shore from Gaspé Bay to Mont-Louis in 1758, but only with great difficulty, and they returned in captured sloops. It is only natural that communication in Gaspé should be almost exclusively by water. There were few dangerous shoals so Gaspésians coasted the shores in their *chaloupes* without difficulty.

So Gaspé was naturally oriented towards the sea and especially towards fishing. Although ice conditions along the coast prevented a winter fishery such as New England enjoyed, Gaspé did possess other requisites for a successful fishery. Cod could be caught close to shore and this was an advantage not only for its convenience but also because coastal cod was smaller and thus better for drying than, for example, the cod of the Grand Banks. And it was in dried cod that Gaspé specialized. Even when dried, however, cod still had to

2 The roadstead of Ile Percé, probably 1686. Note the ships and *chaloupes* in the water and the stages along the shore where the cod were cleaned and salted. Note also the flakes where the cod were dried and the dwellings, churches and gardens of the fishermen. *(Original in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*

be speedily delivered to European markets before it spoiled. Gaspé was farther from France than the Grand Banks but it made little difference; the voyage home generally took little more than a month. Owing to the prevailing westerly winds in the Atlantic, this is two to three times as fast as the France-to-Gaspé trip.[8]

Geography also affected the choice of places of settlement in Gaspé. When selecting sites to settle, the French had to choose the most favourable combination of terraces, beaches and gentle slopes; proximity to fishing grounds; good harbours; protection from attack by the English; length of fishing season; fur trade potential, and agricultural potential. Enough terraces and gentle slopes for settlement were not difficult to find on any of the coasts but suitable beaches for drying fish were not abundant. Nevertheless, the French bore with the disadvantages of limited beach space and no harbour at Percé or Bonaventure in order to exploit the excellent fishing there. Some Percé fishermen even took their fish to dry on the beaches of Gaspé Bay.[9] After the English wiped the French out of the Percé area in 1690, defence was considered more important than fish resources so the focus of the Gaspé fisheries shifted northward to Gaspé Bay. This bay had excellent defensive possibilities, but they were never fulfilled nor even begun. However, it had extensive beaches and the best harbour in Gaspé; here French fishermen could at least hide from predatory English warships. Its weakness was that *chaloupes* had to go much farther to fish. The potential for agriculture as a supplement to fisheries income was more favourable on the south coast but this coast was exposed to attack and its harbours and fishing grounds were poor. Little fishing was done here. The north coast had a more favourable potential for trade in furs to supplement the fisheries there, and being in the St. Lawrence River it was more remote from the danger of hostile New England and closer to the defences of Quebec. But here the fishing season was short and harbours shallow. Those cold, damp, northeast winds delayed the fishing season until June, long after the cod had arrived; and then the cod left again in mid-August.[10] Obviously fur and agriculture were the least important of all the geographic considerations.

When geography alone was considered, the most favourable sites for development in Gaspé were found along the eastern shore. However, there was another factor to be considered – an external factor – which interfered in the proper consideration of geographic factors. The selection of the most favourable locations for development was hampered by government interference. When the government set limits to the free fishery in Gaspé and when it granted seigneuries which excluded some fishermen and when it subsequently found it necessary to arrange compromises between visiting fishermen and seigneurs, it was introducing external and non-geographic factors. Still, the development of the naturally most favourable sites for fishing and settlement prevailed over this outside interference because the government had little real control over the Gaspé fisheries.

In New France, except for Newfoundland, Gaspé was the closest French settlement to the motherland but it was the more remote St. Lawrence River Valley which developed more than either. Development in New France required fur trade for a capital base and agriculture for a population base and Gaspé and Newfoundland had the potential for neither. Nor did Gaspé offer France much in the way of timber or minerals. Even if Gaspé had abounded in these resources, its relative proximity to Europe would not have been a particularly important advantage.

But there was one resource in which Gaspé and Newfoundland did abound and for which speedy delivery to Europe was an asset. It was the dried cod in which Gaspé specialized. The Newfoundland fisheries developed more quickly than those of Gaspé – perhaps because they were even closer to France – but when France lost Newfoundland in 1713 there was no resultant increase in development in Gaspé. The French directed their attention towards expanding the fisheries of Cape Breton, perhaps because they realized that the Gaspé fisheries could accommodate no more fishermen or ships. Dry-cod fisheries nowhere stimulated extensive permanent settlement.

There was some government interest in the 1720s in encouraging development in Gaspé but nothing came of it. In 1724 and 1725 the government had *aveux et dénombrements* (reports) prepared on seven seigneuries previously granted in Gaspé and found that only two had ever been occupied and that one of these was now abandoned. All the seigneurs claimed, however, that they were planning development in the very near future. Only one of the other six was ever developed and it by a later owner.[1]

In 1724, two agents, Jacques l'Hermitte and Louis Gosselin, were sent along the St. Lawrence to search for new resources of spar masts for the French navy. After finding little timber of any promise there, they continued in 1726 farther along the coast to the Bay of Chaleurs. Here they

reported "a considerable stand of fine pine and spruce proper for masts." A sample was sent to France where it all failed to pass inspection. P. W. Bamford feels that this failure was due to poor cutting and preparation rather than poor quality timber. But in any case, this failure resulted in the French never again trying to exploit the considerable timber resources of Gaspé.[2] The sawmill reported on the York River when the English destroyed the Gaspé Bay settlement in 1758 was surely only for local use and not a source of lumber for export.

Explorers of the New World were always on the lookout for rich mineral deposits. As early as the 1580s there were rumours of silver deposits on the Cape of Gaspé. Over the years there were many other rumours of minerals awaiting exploitation in Gaspé: Pierre Boucher reported that the area was rich in coal and gypsum, while Denis Riverin reported copper, saltpetre and slate.[3] But only two attempts were made to exploit the minerals of Gaspé.

One of the first projects to attract the enthusiasm of Jean Talon, Intendant of New France, was a lead mine near Gaspé Bay. He had a party of workmen including a German engineer sent from France in 1665 to spend several months digging for the ore. Serious accidents and two deaths plagued the project and in the end not enough ore was found to merit continuing the operation.[4]

From 1729 to 1734, a group of Quebec entrepreneurs expended considerable effort trying to develop a slate-works at Grand-Etang on the northern shore of Gaspé. If they had succeeded, the quarry would have been a great asset to the colony, for few buildings in New France were covered with fire-resistant roofs and the towns were constantly battling serious fires. The government was naturally interested and tried to assist the project: it assisted, for example, by trying to provide qualified and willing workers. The work was hampered by difficulties of management, but in the end the slate-works failed when it could not produce slate of good enough quality or price to compete with slate imported from Europe.[5] Neither of these mining ventures attracted any permanent settlers to Gaspé.

Agriculture in Gaspé could never be extensive, but as early as 1623, Gabriel Sagard reported that seamen had gardens in Gaspé where they grew sorrel and other herbs.[6] As in this case, agriculture was always subordinate to the fishing industry. Despite reports of more extensive tracts of good land on the lower-lying coast of the Bay of Chaleurs, agriculture in Gaspé was confined to the much smaller pockets of arable land on the eastern and northern coasts of the peninsula where the fishing was more active. It is truer to say, as Louis Gosselin said of the area around Gaspé Bay, "the soil is good for gardening but not for agriculture."[7]

Much of the agriculture practised in Gaspé was by visiting sailors or fishermen. Some were only summer visitors to Gaspé, but others were residents who required locally procurable non-fish supplements to their diet during the winter months when no ships came from France. Large-scale farming on the northern and eastern coasts was impossible in the French regime because of the mountainous and heavily forested terrain. Clearing the land would have required a large amount of capital investment from which returns would have been slow to materialize. Some agriculture was practised at Denys' Percé establishment but this post was always in serious financial difficulty due to lack of capital and it was wiped out by the English in 1690. Denis Riverin's subsequent project to establish a sedentary fishery with a solid agricultural base at Mont-Louis was in an area much less exposed to English attack but it, too, failed because of disputes between him and his financial supporters who wanted the surer and quicker returns on capital which trade in furs usually produced.

The only viable and permanent communities in Gaspé during the French regime were centered in Gaspé Bay and in the Pabos, Grand-Rivière area and, in these, agriculture was secondary to fishing. In 1752, the Minister of Marine wanted the governor at Quebec to encourage agricultural settlements in the valleys of the rivers flowing southward into the Bay of Chaleurs. He felt that fishing must be de-emphasized in Gaspé in favour of agriculture. Obviously no one in France or Quebec knew anything about the particular problems or resources of Gaspé.[8] Nothing was done: nothing could be done.

Minerals and furs were the principal attractions of the New World to the early explorers. Although they were disappointed by the minerals of New France, the furs brought them back again. While coasting the shores of the Bay of Chaleurs, Cartier's crew twice traded with the Indians for their fur until "nothing was left to them but their naked bodies."[9] The early fishing voyages to Gaspé apparently came with the intention of trading for furs as well as fishing,[10] but fish must still have been the first prize. The first year Europeans are known to have wintered in Gaspé was that of 1615-16 when five men from La Rochelle were left at Matane to trade with the Indians. The financiers of the project had sent earlier trading expeditions there and intended to have some men winter there again in 1617, but they were forced out by the monopoly of the Prince of Condé.[11] The Rochelais were solely interested in furs and when they did not return in 1617, the centre of French interest in the fur trade moved irrevocably up the St. Lawrence River and into the fur-rich interior of New France. After this abortive attempt, the fur trade of Gaspé remained only as an occasionally profitable supplement to the fisheries. This secondary fur trade in Gaspé was considered exempt from the monopolies in force in the heart of New France and this exemption was confirmed in 1685 by a royal ordinance.[12]

Apparently another sideline was the smuggling of furs from the interior of New France to Gaspé where they would be loaded on fishing ships headed, for example, for Bilbao in Spain.[13]

The fur trade was dependent on good river transportation and, of course, on good

furs, and both were lacking in Gaspé. For those interested in furs it became evident that fur in Gaspé would always be of very minor importance and that greater profits were to be made in the larger, more accessible and richer fur-bearing areas in the interior of the continent. For those interested in investing in Gaspé it became evident that fishing would be the more lucrative field.

Occasionally the king instructed his governor at Quebec that for military and commercial reasons, he must promote the settlement of the land between Acadia and Canada. He could not specify what kind of settlement he wished because few people in France understood the special geography of Gaspé. Nor did the king follow his instructions with any money to encourage development in Gaspé.[14]

New France, like any underdeveloped region, was always short of investment capital. Capital invested in the colony was naturally directed towards those activities which would produce the largest return in the shortest possible period. Generally, most investment was directed to the St. Lawrence Valley rather than to Gaspé or Newfoundland with their difficult terrains. Rich mineral deposits in Gaspé could certainly have produced large and quick profits but the two mining ventures which were begun were both within sight of the sea. No one found minerals in the interior of the peninsula (where, as we know today, rich deposits do exist) because Europeans simply never ventured into the wild interior. Any money coming to New France for agricultural investment naturally went to Acadia or the St. Lawrence Valley where larger tracts of more easily cleared land were available.

Without immigration or capital for investment in mining or fur trading or agricultural settlement, development in Gaspé could never be extensive. Fishing settlements were never large but they could be established on the more amenable coast, always within sight of the sea. The whale and seal fisheries of the Gulf of St. Lawrence did not require landing spots or nearby settlements at all, but the cod fishery, which did require landing, was even more important and profitable. It was the cod which attracted capital investment and those Europeans who did come to Gaspé.

We do not know exactly when European fishermen first pursued cod to the shores of Gaspé. Cartier does not note the presence of any, but Jean Alfonse, who visited in 1542, mentions that "on this [Gaspé] coast and at Anticosti Island there is a large fishery for cod and other fish, more than at Newfoundland."[1] Both Alfonse and Thevet (writing about 1586) claim that the fish at Gaspé are of better quality as well. Also significant, they both mention the name *la Baye des Molues* (the Bay of Cod). this is the first known use of this name which has been transformed over the years into "Mal-Baie."[2]

It seems, then, that Europeans were fishing the Gaspé coasts at an early date but it is not until 1599 that we have any details of the Gaspé fishery. In that year, two of the leading shipowners of La Rochelle, Samuel Georges and Jean Macain, joined with another merchant, Michel Marguy, to outfit and send the 120-ton *Notre-Dame d'Espérance* to Newfoundland and Gaspé to engage in both fishing and fur trading. Georges and Macain were to take the risks for "all perils of sea, war, friends, enemies and others" that the ships would meet from the day it left port until 24 hours after it dropped anchor in Bilbao (Spain), St. Jean-de-Luz (Basque France) or any other European port.[3]

In 1600, Henry Couillard, bourgeois of Honfleur, sent Guillaume Thourou to fish for cod at Ile Percé (the first known use of this name). Couillard pledged his responsibility for all "the risks of sea and war, going and returning," while Thourou pledged his life. Thourou was paid seven *écus* plus 35 per cent of the catch.[4]

These documents mention Gaspé and Percé as obviously well-known place names, indicating that fishermen had been visiting the Gaspé area for some time. In the 17th century, settlement began in New France and accounts left by traders, colonizers, colonists and missionaries document more fully the Gaspé fisheries.

Such was the beginning of a fishery which was valuable to France and New France and which made Gaspé distinct

from the rest of New France. This French fishery developed a little later than that of Newfoundland. Roman Catholic France had a large market for fish and large domestic supplies of solar salt to make possible the green cod fishery for which the Grand Banks of Newfoundland were so suitable. Green curing involves salting the fish right on board the ship and thus involves no need to land on shore; the ships could hurry home as soon as they were full. The Grand Banks made this possible for they were the closest New World fishery to the channel ports of Honfleur, St. Malo and Le Havre, and because they produced the larger cod which was preferred for the green fishery. Some cod was dried, but usually after arriving home. Dried cod did not have a large market in France for the French people simply preferred green cod.

When the fishermen of southern France later entered the New World fisheries, they found that it was more difficult for green cod to survive the longer voyages to their more southerly ports of St. Jean-de-Luz, Bayonne and La Rochelle without spoiling in the hotter climate. Thus they adopted the technique of dry curing which required more men and an elaborate (and thus slower and costlier) process of drying cod on land. This process required less salt, however, thus leaving more room on ship for fish, and enabled France to supply her southern provinces and develop an important valuable export trade to Marseilles and the Roman Catholic countries of the Mediterranean. The harbours and beaches of Gaspé and the smaller, more easily dried cod found there made Gaspé attractive to those French interested in dry cod. The fishermen of southern France dominated the dry fishery but others, from Honfleur and Granville, for example, also participated.

The most favourable time for the fishermen to have their ports in France was no later than mid-April in order to take advantage of the northeast winds which are most common at this time of year in the Atlantic. The voyage from France to Gaspé took two to three months so an early departure saw them there after the ice had left and on time for the arrival of the first cod in June. An early departure was also necessary to claim the best drying beaches as well. Jean Talon recommended a northerly route (apparently despite the threat of icebergs) for the winds were more favourable there and the ships might also "avoid the corsairs, . . . heat and calms of the south."[5]

The English at their Newfoundland dry fisheries found that it was more convenient and cheaper to leave men behind for the winter. The French did succeed in establishing some sedentary fisheries in Gaspé, but generally they transported large numbers of fishermen and their provisions and equipment back and forth across the ocean every year. The sedentary fishery at Mont-Louis operated with nearby Quebec as its base; Denys' establishment at Percé never became solvent and then was wiped out by the English, and the later sedentary fisheries at Pabos, Grand-Rivière and Gaspé Bay were just developing when they too were wiped out by war.

The French fishing vessel going to the Gaspé or Newfoundland dry fisheries then had to be larger than an English (dry fishing) ship or a French (green fishing) ship in Newfoundland. It had to carry all the fishermen, their provisions and equipment, *chaloupes,* salt (or tons of fish on the return trip) and quite frequently mail and passengers. Colbert noted the difference in sizes in an inventory dated 1664: ships going to Newfoundland for the green fishery ranged from 40 to 100 tons in size while those sailing for the dry fishery carried more men and ranged up to 250 tons.[6] In 1675, two perhaps typical ships going to the dry fisheries were *le Simbole de la paix* of 220 tons which carried 70 men and *le Bannière de France* of 205 tons which carried 65 men.[7]

The ships had to carry an enormous amount of provisions on board to feed such large numbers of men for up to six months. The only possible supplement to the ship's diet during the voyage was that provided by the small gardens planted ashore, meat from an occasional hunt and, of course, cod, mackerel and more cod.[8] *Le Simbole de la paix* returned to Ile Percé in 1676, this time carrying 56 men. As provisions it carried 4,200 pounds of biscuit, 24 casks of cider, 800 pounds of butter, 300 pounds of dried cod, 126 pounds of bacon, 14 bushels of peas and 16 of beans, and 25 pounds of oil.[9] Each ship carried a surgeon (who also helped out drying fish) and a supply of medicine.[10] Besides clothing, fishing nets and lines and all the other equipment, ships usually carried some sort of armed protection against pirates. *Le Simbole de la paix,* returning again in 1680, carried 18 cannons, 6 mortars, 40 muskets, 13 pistols, 24 pikes, 40 bandoleers, 1,400 pounds of powder, 200 pounds of cannon balls, 100 pounds of musket shot and 18 cutlasses.[11]

For every *chaloupe* used in the fishery there were about five men – two on the beach and three in the *chaloupe.* All these *chaloupes* had to be transported from France to Gaspé where they were then left over the winter in the hope of finding them there the next spring. The marine ordinance of 1681 provided stiff fines for anyone appropriating another's *chaloupes* but also provided that if it became evident that the owner was not returning to Gaspé that year, one could use them on the condition that he pay the owners some rent on returning to France. The *chaloupes* were 20 to 25 feet long, cost about 150 *livres* and carried oars and a sail, three fishermen, their equipment and normally one day's catch (perhaps up to 500 to 600 cod); at the end of the day the fish would then be taken ashore for curing. Nicholas Denys says that some *chaloupes* were brought over intact but that others were transported in four or five sections and re-assembled by carpenters (who were fishermen too). The next year they might require repair but often replacement. Thus, French fishing vessels were always encumbered on the outgoing voyage with sometimes up to 10 or 12 *chaloupes.*[12]

The dry fishery which characterized Gaspé required extra men for work on the

beaches, but at least the ships did not have to carry as much salt as the green fishery required. The dry fishery used only about one-third that used in the green fishery,[13] but salt was still important. When Brother Sagard sailed to Canada he joined a fishing ship in Dieppe which then sailed all the way around to Brouage to pick up its salt before continuing on to Gaspé. Occasionally not all the salt was used, but it was not returned to France for the space was needed for the dried cod: it was cached ashore for the succeeding season.[14]

As is seen in the voyage of Sagard the fishing vessels also often carried passengers to Gaspé where they then took a *chaloupe* to Quebec. The practice involved the transport of mail and even supplies as well as people and, of course, included travel from New France to Europe too.[15]

Encumbered by all this impedimenta the large French vessel was an easy prey for pirates and enemy ships. Their armament might sound impressive but the crew were fishermen, not warriors. In addition to the danger of capture were the natural perils of the sea – storms and sickness. There are many accounts of shipwrecks at Gaspé and of attacks on Gaspé fishermen, both in war and peace. In 1613, refugees from Port Royal, which had been seized by the English, were sent to Paspébiac where they were put on two Malouin ships. For one of the ships the arrival of refugees was opportune, for somehow, through storm, sickness or war, "it had lost many of its crew and could scarcely have returned without this chance meeting and fresh reinforcement afforded by our wanderers."[16]

As can be seen, financing a vessel engaged in dry fishing was both expensive and risky. When the first news arrived in La Rochelle of the English attack on Percé in 1690, businessmen of that city were so alarmed that insurance rates on fishing vessels rose to 45 per cent in one day. Their alarm was not without reason for at least two La Rochelle ships were captured. A certain Nicolas Lion of Honfleur had a half-interest in these vessels which had cost 7,000 *livres*. He reports that one, *l'Espérance*, had a burden of 200 tons and carried 42 men. *La Ste. Vièrge* was new and had a burden of 150 tons and could carry 70,000 cod. The risks were great and losses like these were serious, but the rewards appear to have been large for M. Lion says that *La Ste. Vièrge* – the smaller of the two ships – would have brought him 50,000 *livres*. He had insured the two together for only 3,000 *livres*.[17]

M. Lion also lamented the loss of his captain and seven of his crew in the encounter: they could not be insured. His concern was probably sincere for everyone in France recognized the importance of the seaman to the kingdom. Numerous regulations were enacted to provide for his health, diet and safety and most ships carried a doctor. The seaman's salary, although varying from port to port in France, was a certain guaranteed share of the catch. The Basques are reported to have given their crews shares ranging from one-quarter to one-third to four-tenths of the fish to divide among themselves.[18] Conditions were certainly not perfect, but a genuine attempt was made to protect their welfare.

Health conditions on ships going to the French West Indies were much worse, so fishermen going to Gaspé considered themselves well off. Although Talon had tried to encourage the export of dried cod from New France to the slaves of the West Indian sugar plantations, this trade never flourished. It was difficult to coordinate shipping between the fishing ports of France, the fisheries of New France and the islands of the Indies, for one had to take into account the fishing season and the ice-free shipping season in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the sugar harvesting and hurricane-free season in the Caribbean. In 1755, Sieur La Pause encountered a Malouin ship which was apparently engaged in selling Gaspé cod in Martinique,[19] but it was seldom that Gaspé fishermen had to worry about health conditions in the West Indies.

Fishermen from many ports of France participated in the dry fishery of Gaspé but, as Pierre Denys noted, there were none better than the Basques. He claimed that one *chaloupe* manned by Basques could catch better than three times more fish than one *chaloupe* manned by any other fishermen.[20] At the same time, the French felt that methods developed by the English were in some ways better. At one time they even considered bringing in English fishermen to captain French ships and teach the French their methods.[21] The methods of dry curing were quite complex, involving an elaborate and precise series of cleaning, salting, drying, wetting, turning the fish over and drying some more (*see* Fig. 1). Perhaps the Basques were so expert at dry curing because they seldom bothered with any green curing. The Normans, on the other hand, tried to engage in both green and dry fishing. It was common practice in Gaspé for the Basques to make exchanges with the Normans: the Basques would give the Normans one large cod for two small cod which were more suitable for dry curing.[22]

But as Denys says, it was in the fishing itself that the Basques especially excelled. Novice seamen were generally given shore duty for fishing from a *chaloupe* required skill both in fishing and in seamanship. Six days a week, even in the rain, they would sail out in their fragile *chaloupes*, often to fish far from shore. They fished with lines baited with cod entrails, or bits of capelin, mackerel and herring caught earlier by nets. At day's end they had to hurry to shore and unload their cod before supper.

Often, though, it was a long distance from the fishery to a beach suitable for either drying on the rocks or for erecting flakes. The first ship arriving in Gaspé claimed the best beach; but then the fishermen might choose to fish on one of the more distant offshore banks. Or, ships arriving later might choose to fish along the shore but find that there were no more good beaches remaining nearby. The procedure of *chaloupes* taking their fish to beaches far from where their ship was anchored was called *pêche en dégrat*. At Îles Percé and Bonaventure there were often too many fishermen for the extent of beach available, and many fishermen took

their fish to dry on the south shore of Gaspé Bay.[23]

The monotonous process of catching each fish by line from a *chaloupe* and the laborious process of curing them ashore continued usually from June until September. By this time, the fishermen usually had enough cod to fill their ship, and anyhow most of the cod had gone by then. Men, equipment and fish were loaded on the ship for the return trip. It may have been monotonous and laborious but it was also profitable, and they came back year after year. A Captain Lefevre is reported fishing at Ile Percé in 1647 and was there again in 1660.[24] Captain Claverie of Bayonne is noted at Ile Percé in 1686 and again in 1699.[25]

As settlement developed in New France, the rewards of the cod fishery of Gaspé became more evident and inviting. It could benefit both the colonists of New France and the consumers of the mother country for cod might be supplied more cheaply to both. As Father Le Jeune reported in 1636, Canada was an open market: "We have Cod fish at our door, so to speak. They come from France to fish for it in our great river, at Gaspé, at Isle Percé, at Bonaventure, at Miscou; and yet the codfish that is eaten at Kébec generally comes from France, because there are not yet enough men to go down to that fishery."[26]

The fisheries of Acadia were considered too distant to supply Canada.[27] French fishermen were slow to take advantage of the Canadian market for cod, even though it could usually bring higher prices at Quebec than in France. After the peace of 1713, some *habitants* ventured down the St. Lawrence towards Gaspé in small boats to fish for cod. These fishermen were all small entrepreneurs usually consisting of a father and his sons and perhaps a few neighbours *engagés* (hired) for the season. The season was short for the men fished for only the two months between seeding time and harvest.[28] The government at Quebec encouraged this practice and by 1734, so many families were participating that the price of cod had been depressed to as low as 8 or 9 *livres* per quintal.[29]

This interest in Gaspé fishing was short-lived, though, and the price of dried cod was usually higher in Canada than in France. A quintal of cod is reported to have sold for 15 *livres* in France in the early 1750s while in Canada it was selling for 35 *livres* a quintal in 1751.[30] The English reported that in 1758 a quintal of dried cod was worth 36 to 40 *livres* at Quebec. A French source of that year reports a price of 45 *livres*.[31] When war cut off communications with the outside world in 1759, the price rose to 250 *livres*.[32]

For years the French tried to encourage a sedentary fishery on the St. Lawrence including the waters of Gaspé. They believed that instead of having fishermen come from France or Quebec every year, it would be better to encourage them to live the year-round in Gaspé. They hoped that a sedentary fishery would provide a more dependable supply of dried cod to Canada and thus more stable prices. A sedentary fishery could also be more efficient: as Denys pointed out, if men were left to winter in Gaspé they could continue to fish until the last cod had left for deeper water; they could protect stores of fish, salt and the *chaloupes* left behind; and in spring, they could repair the *chaloupes*, flakes, cabarets and other structures. He says that while there might be 50 men on a fishing ship, only 25 were required to sail the ship: if 25 men were left behind the space filled by them and their provisions could be more profitably filled by fish.[33] A sedentary fishery which used Canadians could also help solve the colony's problem of its *coureurs de bois* by offering youth alternative employment.[34] It was also suggested that sedentary fisheries should be developed because, unlike the fur trade, they would not be dependent on the capricious assistance of Indians.[35]

The king did little to encourage sedentary fisheries in New France. In 1669, he allowed cod caught by inhabitants of Canada to enter France on the same tariff rate as cod belonging to fishermen from France.[36] In 1689, he sent over some Basque fishermen to teach Canadians the fundamentals of fishing. The king favoured sedentary fisheries because he did not like to see French supply ships returning from New France empty (the chief commodity the colony exported was furs which were, relatively, not a bulky product): Louis felt they should drop by the fisheries and pick up a load of cod on their way home.[37]

The encouragement offered by the king was not sufficient to get such fisheries over the initial period of heavy capital investment. Both 17th century sedentary fisheries – at Percé and at Mont-Louis – were doomed before they began due to inadequate financing. Denis Riverin was allowed to freight salt to Canada in the king's ships, but that is all. Pierre Denys asked for 20,000 *livres* in subsidies for his seigneury but got not even a *sou*. The king seems to have felt that the mere grant of a seigneury was adequate assistance, and as time progressed his government ended up working against the fishing interests of Gaspé seigneurs.

At least 15 seigneuries were known to have been granted and regranted between 1653 and 1707 in Gaspé. Few of the seigneurs ever visited or used their concessions, simply keeping them for speculative or prestige purposes, and even fewer showed a profit. Two or three were used for a sedentary fishery and a few others were occasionally used for a summer fishery. Some seigneuries were granted in hopes of encouraging men of capital to begin a sedentary fishery: thus Denis Riverin was granted the fief of Cap-Chat in 1688.[38] Others were granted as favours to men of status in New France: thus René Hubert, chief bailiff of the Superior Council, received the fief of Pabos in 1696.[39] As might be expected seigneurial rights often conflicted with the principle that the first-arrived fishermen got first choice of beaches and led to considerable trouble between seigneurs from Canada and fishermen from France (and even some from Quebec).

The charter of the Company of One Hundred Associates (1627) granted all commercial rights in New France to the com-

pany except those of the cod and whale fishery "which His Majesty wishes to be free to all his subjects."[40] Colbert's great Ordinance of the Marine of 1681 both clarified the fishing regulations in Gaspé and confused them at the same time. The ordinance reaffirmed the principle that the captain of the first-arrived fishing ship would have first choice of beaches and could even reserve beaches for associates coming later. At the same time, the ordinance also tried to solve the problem between this principle of a free fishery and the royal policy of granting seigneuries by clearly setting limits to the free fishery – between Cap-d'Espoir and Cap-des-Rosiers.[41] This only confused the situation, however, for the king had already granted Pierre Denys a seigneury at Percé, within the limits of this free fishery. This concession naturally gave Denys first choice of lots, although it provided that he allow visiting fishermen to use those beach lots he did not require.

There were not enough beaches at Percé to accommodate all the fishermen who frequented these fisheries and when the Intendant DeMeulles visited there in 1686, he found that war was almost ready to break out among the visiting fishermen. He solved the problem, for that year anyhow, by drawing up regulations giving preference in the reservation of beaches to the visiting fishermen.[42] This was a serious setback to the fishing rights of Gaspé seigneurs.

The problem, however, continued to plague the Gaspé fisheries for decades and the government (now the government at Quebec) consistently sought compromises between resident fishermen and summer fishermen – compromises which, in effect, extended the free fishery. Jean-Claude Louet, notary at Quebec, had become the principal shareholder in the seigneury of Port Daniel by marrying the widow of the original seigneur, René Deneau. Apparently he tried to exclude visiting summer fishermen, but in 1717 the Intendant Bégon ruled that he must select only the extent of beach that he required for his own fishery and allow the visitors to use the remainder without hindrance. There is no evidence that Louet himself ever did exploit the fishery at Port Daniel.[43]

Port Daniel was well outside the free fishery as delimited in 1681; and so were the north shore seigneuries of La Grande Vallée des Monts Notre-Dame, La Rivière de la Madeleine and L'Anse de l'Etang. These were owned by the Sieurs Hazeur and Sarazin, merchants of Quebec, who leased the rights to fishing and fur trading to another Quebec merchant, Sieur Gatien, for three years. In spring, 1725, Gatien complained to Bégon that he had been preparing to send 3 ships of 40 tons each to fish there with 14 *chaloupes* and 65 men. But he had learned that two other Quebec merchants, Sieurs Peyre and Becquet, had just sent five men in a canoe to reserve the beach for a later expedition.

Peyre and Becquet countered that they were only sending men to repair their flakes which they and Gatien himself had used at these beaches before the lease so there would be no delay when the season began. They claimed that although the north shore of Gaspé seemed extensive, there were actually few places where one could fish for there were few sheltered coves big enough to hold ships, and besides, due to ice and contrary winds all through May, they could only reach these beaches after the cod had arrived. They explained the difficulties under which fishermen from Canada operated and why a free fishery on the Gaspé north shore was consequently necessary: they could not compete successfully with the better organized and earlier arriving fishermen from France in the small area set aside as a free fishery in 1681; Canadians were only part-time fishermen and had to sow their fields in spring so all the beaches in the free fishery were gone by the time they arrived; nor was the Canadian fisherman sufficiently skilled to engage in the more difficult and dangerous offshore fishery. Peyre and Becquet based their case on the claim that seigneurial fishing rights applied only to waters enclosed by the seigneury and to the sea only so far as the low tide level; that the king had declared the cod fishery to be free and open to all; and, this being the king's pleasure, that it was only reasonable to assume that the king also meant to include freedom of the beaches for drying fish.

Bégon disagreed but sympathized with them and arranged a compromise whereby Gatien could appropriate only a certain extent of the beach on his own lease, leaving the remainder to Peyre and Becquet.[44] There is indication that these fisheries were worked for at least the next few years. A similar situation arose at Mont-Louis the same year and was resolved by Bégon in the same manner.[45]

In some cases, as in Louet's seigneury of Port Daniel, there was no real problem of enforcing the government's decisions for the seigneurs never did visit their concessions or have others exploit them. In other cases, as in that of the seigneuries of Hazeur and Sarrazin, the government had no difficulty in enforcing its decisions for all those concerned were merchants resident in Quebec fishing on the northern Gaspé coast, the closest Gaspé fisheries to Quebec. The Lefebvre de Bellefeuille family, however, were permanent residents of their seigneury at Pabos which was more distant from Quebec. In the 1730s and 1740s, they clashed with visiting fishermen from France. Having established a sedentary fishery at Pabos they had access to a local source of manpower which they armed with guns to defend their seigneurial rights, and in 1730 they prevented a fishing party from Bayonne from landing there. They apparently rented beach lots in advance to selected fishermen. When there were complaints in France, the Bellefeuilles claimed simply that since their seigneury was outside the free fishery as delimited in 1681, they had full rights to decide who used the beaches of their seigneury. Still, the Minister of Marine tried to get Governor Beauharnois to force the Bellefeuilles to give first choice of beach lots to the first-arrived ship. The family's legal position was strong but Hazeur and Sarrazin had been in the same position and been forced to relinquish

some of their seigneurial rights. The Bellefeuilles were able to resist the pressure, but they had the advantage of being permanent residents of a more remote seigneury. They continued to rent beach lots and eventually they were appointed agents of the Quebec Intendant in Gaspé.

In the 1750s, the Sieur Jean Barré, a long-time and prominent resident of their seigneury, appropriated to himself several beach lots outside of the Pabos seigneury, at Pointe Verte and Paspébiac. A local fisherman objected and took his case to Quebec where Bigot, the Intendant, ruled that Barré had no right to hold these beaches. Bigot also ruled that Bellefeuille, as his agent in Gaspé, should enforce his decision, but despite further reminders, Bellefeuille would not act on the matter. Perhaps his inaction was because Barré, being one of the few residents who could approach the Bellefeuilles in social standing in this remote area, was most likely a friend of the family.[46] Again the titular centre of government authority was powerless to impose its will; again Gaspé showed its spirit of independence.

The government at Quebec had no intention of discouraging sedentary fisheries in Gaspé but, when the interests of the sedentary fishermen and those of the visiting fishermen conflicted, it tried to give precedence to the latter, whenever it had the power to do so. The government must have realized that the welfare of the summer fishery was more immediately important than the potential of a sedentary fishery. It was seigneurs from Quebec who stood to suffer, for it was they who ran the sedentary fisheries. But the government at Quebec also stood to lose, for it was relinquishing more authority in Gaspé. As a result, the Gaspé fisheries were obviously less within the influence of the government of New France than they were within the economic orbit of Old France or even their own independent little world.

Among the fisheries of the North Atlantic, Gaspé was never considered as valuable as, for example, Newfoundland or Cape Breton Island. But still it was considered of some importance by France as well as by her rivals. As soon as Kirke had control of the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1629 (before Quebec had even fallen), there were English fishermen at Gaspé.[47] On other occasions foreign fishermen, such as the Spaniards reported at Gaspé by Frontenac in 1674,[48] simply tried to fish there unobtrusively, presumably in hopes they would not be challenged by the French.

The English had long been interested in the Atlantic fisheries but in the 18th century the centre of their enterprise shifted to New England.[49] New Englanders were physically closer to Gaspé and thus were even more aware of the desirability of its fisheries and in a better position to do something about obtaining them. They showed an interest in them even before the end of the 17th century. In 1690, New York corsairs wiped out the sedentary fishery at Percé but French ships returned for the summer fishery when peace was restored between 1697 and 1702. But the northern colonies were now even more interested in Gaspé: they continued to seize French ships at Gaspé during this hiatus of peace.[50] In 1700, the Earl of Bellomont, Governor of New York, expressed interest in expanding the fisheries of the northern English colonies into Acadia and Gaspé.[51] The final result of the war which resumed in 1702, however, was that their fisheries expanded into Acadia and Newfoundland rather than Gaspé.

It was not for 30 years that the English again began to covet the French fisheries. France had lost some of her Newfoundland fishing facilities but had replaced them by developing a flourishing fishery on Cape Breton Island. The summer fishery at Gaspé probably maintained its previous production. But again the New England fishery required room to expand and this was probably one reason to go to war again. Cape Breton Island was seized, but England returned it to France three years later; but in 1758 they seized Gaspé and Cape Breton and kept them.

Discussions between the French government and the chambers of commerce of St. Malo and Dunkirk about this loss illustrate the importance of these fisheries to France. By the 1760s, the Atlantic fisheries were producing 800,000 quintals (hundredweight) of fish worth 12 million *livres*. The immensity and efficiency of their fishing industry allowed the French to compete favourably in both domestic and export markets; that is, little fish was imported so little French money left the country, and much fish was exported so much foreign exchange was gained. Though not heavily taxed, French fish provided a useful source of tax money to the coastal provinces. Train oil derived from the cod was important to the flourishing French woollen industry. Besides employing 20,000 men the fisheries were also critical to the French kingdom for their contribution to the Royal Navy. The fisheries stimulated the ship-building industry and dried cod was a staple provision of the navy, but more significant, the fisheries were considered "the nursery of the navy." It was the green fishery, however, which provided the more useful men to the navy for it was conducted from ships on the open sea.[52]

St. Malo and Dunkirk were appealing for government assistance to the fishing industry for it had been decimated by the Seven Years' War. The peace treaty of 1763 left France with only the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon and certain beach rights in Newfoundland. They were left with but one-third of their former extent of coastline so it was the dry fishery which suffered the most, and, unlike 1713, this time there were no new areas to develop.

Part II The Communities

In the 150-year life of New France, five areas in the Gaspé peninsula were exploited by Europeans on a basis more permanent than the summer fisheries. Some saw only one or two years of development while others experienced rather extensive settlement. Some were vitally interested in fishing while one was interested exclusively in furs. The five areas were Matane, Mont-Louis, Gaspé Bay, Percé and Pabos, Grande-Rivière. It is at these sites that the distinctiveness and importance of the Gaspé peninsula can be illustrated.

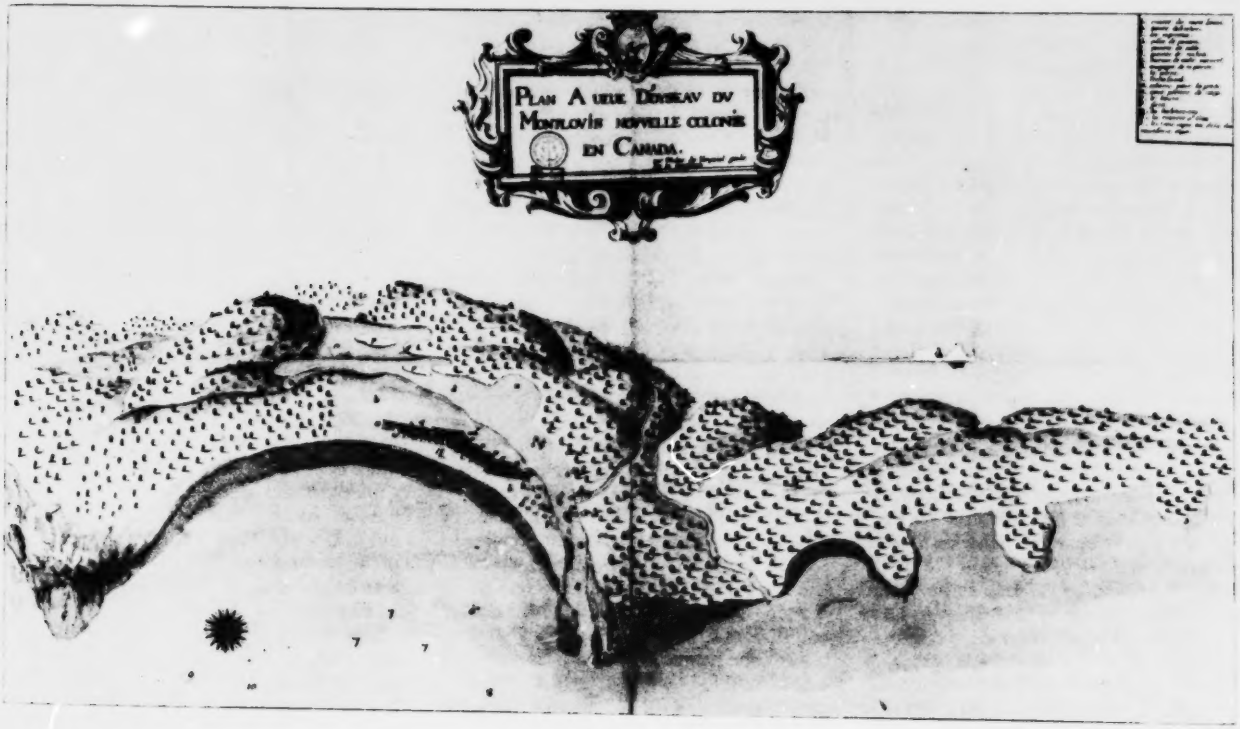
When Champlain published his *Voyages* in 1632, he described Matane thus: "the river Matane . . . at high water, is open for twelve or thirteen leagues, so that average vessels of eighty to a hundred tons can enter. At low tide the harbour is shut by a sandbar, but in the river itself there is enough water to keep vessels afloat."[1] Matane is about 200 miles down-river from Quebec. It was the farthest point up the St. Lawrence to which the cod ascended but, although the French occasionally fished there, it was fur which attracted the only actual development.

In November, 1612, Louis XIII granted his nephew, the Prince of Condé, the title of Vice-Roy in Canada and a monopoly of all fur trade for 12 years. Condé based his operation on the Channel ports of St. Malo and Rouen from where he sent out his lieutenant, Samuel de Champlain, the following spring. Upon arriving, his ships found the Rochelais ship *Le Soleil* at Matane trading for furs. Even though Condé's monopoly began only at Quebec, his men apparently seized *Le Soleil*. For the next trading season Condé succeeded in forming a regular fur trading company with certain merchants of Rouen and St. Malo. There had long been a strong rivalry between the Normans of the Channel ports and the Rochelais of the Atlantic coast, but now it was seriously heightened as the Normans insisted that Condé entirely exclude the Rochelais from the monopoly which now included the stretch between Matane and Quebec. The Rochelais were angered enough to come right back and test the monopoly that year (1614), and again their ship was seized. By this time they had taken their case to court, but it took nearly 20 years for them to win their point. Stubbornly they returned in 1615, and this time succeeded in leaving a trading party of five men to stay the winter undetected at Matane. The men and the furs they had obtained from the Indians during the winter were picked up the following year and returned to La Rochelle.[2]

The Rochelais do not appear to have returned to test the monopoly once again. Perhaps they felt they had won a symbolic victory in successfully trading at Matane, or perhaps the furs traded were too few to attract them back again. But it is interesting that Condé (probably advised by Champlain) wanted to extend the monopoly to Matane, but no farther. Perhaps even at that early date people familiar with the St. Lawrence recognized some sort of economic or geographic point of division at Matane: Champlain probably felt that the Gaspé area down-river from Matane was not an easily accessible or rich fur-bearing region. The Rochelais could easily have moved down-river a little to Cap-Chat or Mont-Louis and been patently outside the restricted area, but they chose to remain at Matane perhaps as a symbolic matter of principle but also perhaps because it was believed to be the limit of good furs in the St. Lawrence Valley. Again, possibly because it was still believed that Gaspé was a poor area for the fur trade, the king could subsequently (1685) afford to confirm that the southern shore of the St. Lawrence below Matane be a free trading area for furs; anyone would now be allowed to trade for furs here if he were interested.[3]

Compared to the country farther up-river, Gaspé was poor in furs and there were fewer Indians, and transportation on the tributary rivers was difficult. Father Gabriel Druilletes accompanied a hunting party in the Matane River valley during the winter of 1647-48. He has left a story of extreme misery, of how the party barely survived starvation due to poor hunting and difficulty of travel.[4] In any case, it seems that it did not take long for the French to recognize that, at least with respect to faunal resources, the St. Lawrence Valley below Matane was a region distinct from the St. Lawrence above Matane.

3 Bird's-eye view of Mont-Louis, probably 1699.
a Rivière Mont-Louis
b point of land already cleared
c flakes
d piles of fish
e sandbars
f rocky areas
g natural rock formation suitable for a defensive position
h magazine
i salt bin
l stages for cleaning fish
m storehouses (?)
n silted cove
o river basin
P small islands
Q habitations
R Rivière St.-Croix
S three capes beyond Mont-Louis
(Original in Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)



An early attempt to establish a sedentary fishery was made at Mont-Louis, another cove on the St. Lawrence, 75 miles down-river from Matane. The cove was smaller than that of Matane, and, as at Matane, a sandbar closed the harbour at low tide. The harbour could accommodate only a few ships up to 100 tons. This would be small for sea voyages but in this case it was no disadvantage, for 100-ton vessels were not too small for use on the St. Lawrence and it was only to Quebec that Mont-Louis sent its fish. The harbour was secure enough, however, and the beach suitable for drying cod. Here, at the end of the 17th century, Denis Riverin formed elaborate plans to establish a fishery with a sound agricultural base able to support a large resident population.

Denis Riverin was born in Tours about 1650 and came to Canada in 1675 as secretary to the Intendant, Duchesneau.[1] He had long been interested in the fisheries of New France, and in a few years he left the government service to try his luck at them. He made his first attempt in 1687 when he hired a crew of experienced fishermen, but he never got started for his ship was wrecked in the Bay of Chaleurs.[2] The government wished to encourage him but all it did in the next few years was grant him four seigneuries in Gaspé and one in Labrador. These were of little use to him except that later he was able to sell one for the cash that he needed so badly. For several years he experimented with fishing in these seigneuries but found them of little use; he was more attracted to areas like Matane and Mont-Louis where he had no seigneurial rights.[3] The king later did send out some Basque fishermen to help Riverin and to teach Canadian *habitants* how to fish, but Riverin appears not to have been able to use them, perhaps because he still could not raise enough capital for a concerted fishing enterprise. France was at war with England so capital was scarce, and besides, the English captured at least one of his ships right in the St. Lawrence.

During the 1690s, Riverin seems to have been held in high favour in government circles for they tried to help him all they could. In 1693 he applied for a seat on the Sovereign Council adding that it would assist him in his fishing enterprises.[4] He suffered from war and bad luck and perhaps, as La Mothe de Cadillac observed, he was a bit of a dreamer too.[5] He was honest and sincere, however, in his schemes to develop a fishery but, when the opportunity finally arrived for him to begin a large-scale fishery, his partners failed him.

In 1696, Riverin joined two Parisian financiers to exploit the fisheries of the lower St. Lawrence, but the project was not pursued in earnest until 1699. In 1697, the government prevented Quebec fishermen from venturing down-river where English ships might capture them. Some advance men had already been sent to claim beaches and they had to be recalled and paid off. Riverin, however, sought to salvage some of the season's preparations by diverting his men to Mont-Louis which was apparently considered close enough to Quebec to be safe. By 1698, Britain and France were (temporarily) at peace again and Riverin had been awarded a seat on the council, so the times were riper now for him to invest in fisheries. In 1699, Riverin took a few settlers to Mont-Louis and provisioned them from Quebec. The same year, the Paris partners, Bourlet and Mageux, agreed that the next year (1700) they would supply the post from France.

For some reason, perhaps because of the physical distance between France and Canada, there was a disagreement or misunderstanding between Riverin and his partners as to the principal interest of the company. Their agent and their ship arrived at the post long after the fishing season began but, in any case, it turned out that their agent, Chaumont, was not really interested in fish but rather in furs. Chaumont apparently did trade in furs but the return was very poor, and certainly the fur trade could not employ the number of settlers Riverin had brought to Mont-Louis for the fisheries. Chaumont refused to allocate any of the company's equipment or provisions for fishing or fishermen. Some of the settlers were sent or taken back to Quebec. Charges and countercharges went on in France for two years before the courts decided that Riverin was responsible for the losses of his partners. He was allowed to return to Quebec to find the means to pay the debt and he found it: he was appointed official representative of the colony at the French court. He soon settled the matter with Bourlet and Mageux who carried on the post as a fishery for several years. However, despite occasional favours by the king (free gunpowder, free freightage of salt) their post gradually died out. Riverin died in Paris in 1717, never having returned to New France.[6]

The failure of the original partnership demonstrates that only someone on the spot, like Riverin, could recognize that Mont-Louis was in an area distinct from Canada, that it was unsuited to fur trading, but well suited to fishing. While operating out of Quebec, Riverin had concentrated on the fisheries of Mont-Louis but when he was forced to bring in capital from France and operate out of France, trouble began.

The Mont-Louis fisheries required Riverin's knowledge and his partners' capital; Riverin could not bring his developmental plans to fruition alone, without European capital (perhaps as much as 60,000 *livres* was spent). And although the French financiers eventually did recognize that Riverin was correct and switched their interests to fishing, Riverin was no longer around to lead the project and it died. Riverin's ideas were essential and it was long before another promoter (or dreamer) ever planned such elaborate schemes for Gaspé again. Pierre Denys had earlier made great plans for an establishment at Percé but had never come as close as Riverin to gaining sufficient capital to test his ideas.

Riverin's idea was to combine agriculture with fishing to provide the post with a more solid, diversified and self-sufficient economy. He believed that Mont-Louis would become "one of the most considerable establishments in the country."[7] In 1699, he had brought a total of 53 people to Mont-Louis – including 9 heads of fam-

ilies and 6 young unmarried men. The next year he had 26 families and a total of 91 people. Most of the men were apparently expected to engage in at least two activities. These were usually farming and fishing but there were other combinations of specializations: stonemasons, carpenters, sawyers, blacksmiths, beachmasters and even a surgeon. One Michel Arbour, who had just married the 13-year-old daughter of another fisherman, is listed as a fisherman-blacksmith-carpenter. Riverin allotted each adult a plot of land to cultivate – 21 *arpents* deep with 3 *arpents* of frontage on the Rivière Mont-Louis, presumably for a drying beach. They were also allotted a 4,000-square-foot house lot in town. By 1700, Riverin reported a busy population blissfully harvesting crops, tending livestock, fishing and cutting timber in the new sawmill. Apparently most of the settlers returned to Quebec that autumn, never to return. The company carried on for a few years with three families reported there in 1706 and 1707 and four in 1712. By 1725, Mont-Louis was a seigneury owned by Louis Gosselin, a Quebec merchant; in an *aveu et dénombrement* of that year he reported only two families resident there. Neither were descendants of Riverin's original settlers.[6] Riverin's plans had been drawn with ambition, enthusiasm and experience, but no Gaspé seigneur seems ever to have followed the model.

Louis Gosselin or his heirs must have sold the seigneury around 1750 to one Michel Maillet, who succeeded in reviving the settlement somewhat. Certainly the fact that he resided on the seigneury permanently must have contributed to the revival. We know little about this seigneury until the English under Wolfe ravaged Gaspé in 1758.

After seizing the settlement at Gaspé Bay at the end of August, Wolfe sent detachments out to Pabos, Miramichi and Mont-Louis. Major Dalling left Gaspé Bay on 14 September, leading a party of about 300 men north and west along the shore. The march took five days and was accomplished only with extreme difficulty; sometimes they were forced over jagged rock and other times they were forced to wait for the tide to go out. Shortly after they arrived on the nineteenth, M. Maillet returned from a voyage to Quebec where he had bought 22,000 *livres* of supplies (presumably for the winter). Dalling turned down a ransom, the goods were seized and the fish and buildings burned. The party returned to Gaspé Bay in sloops taken at Mont-Louis. They returned with Maillet and his wife, 22 men, 4 women and 14 children as prisoners. The French say the prisoners were well treated when they were taken from Gaspé Bay to Louisbourg and then sent to Cancalle in France where they landed on the first of November.

The following spring, Maillet returned to Quebec to recover some debts but he reached there, as he says, "only . . . to be a witness of the two Seiges which that City bore." A prisoner again, he was returned to France on the same ship as Governor Vaudreuil.[9]

In 1758, Mont-Louis was a small but thriving community of 40 to 50 souls. Maillet seems to have prospered from it for he was willing and able to offer a ransom of 3,500 *livres* to keep it. Provisions worth 22,000 *livres* also represent a substantial outlay for a small settlement. The English claimed they burned 6,000 quintals of dried cod there but some of it had probably already been taken to Quebec for sale. Colonel Monckton estimated that about 10,000 quintals of cod were dried at Mont-Louis every year; and that one quintal sold at Quebec for from 36 to 40 *livres;* thus, the community's gross income from fishing approached 400,000 *livres*. All the cod not consumed by the community itself was presumably sold at Quebec and, at the same time, most of the provisions must have been purchased there. This commerce must have represented a contribution of some importance to the economy of New France.

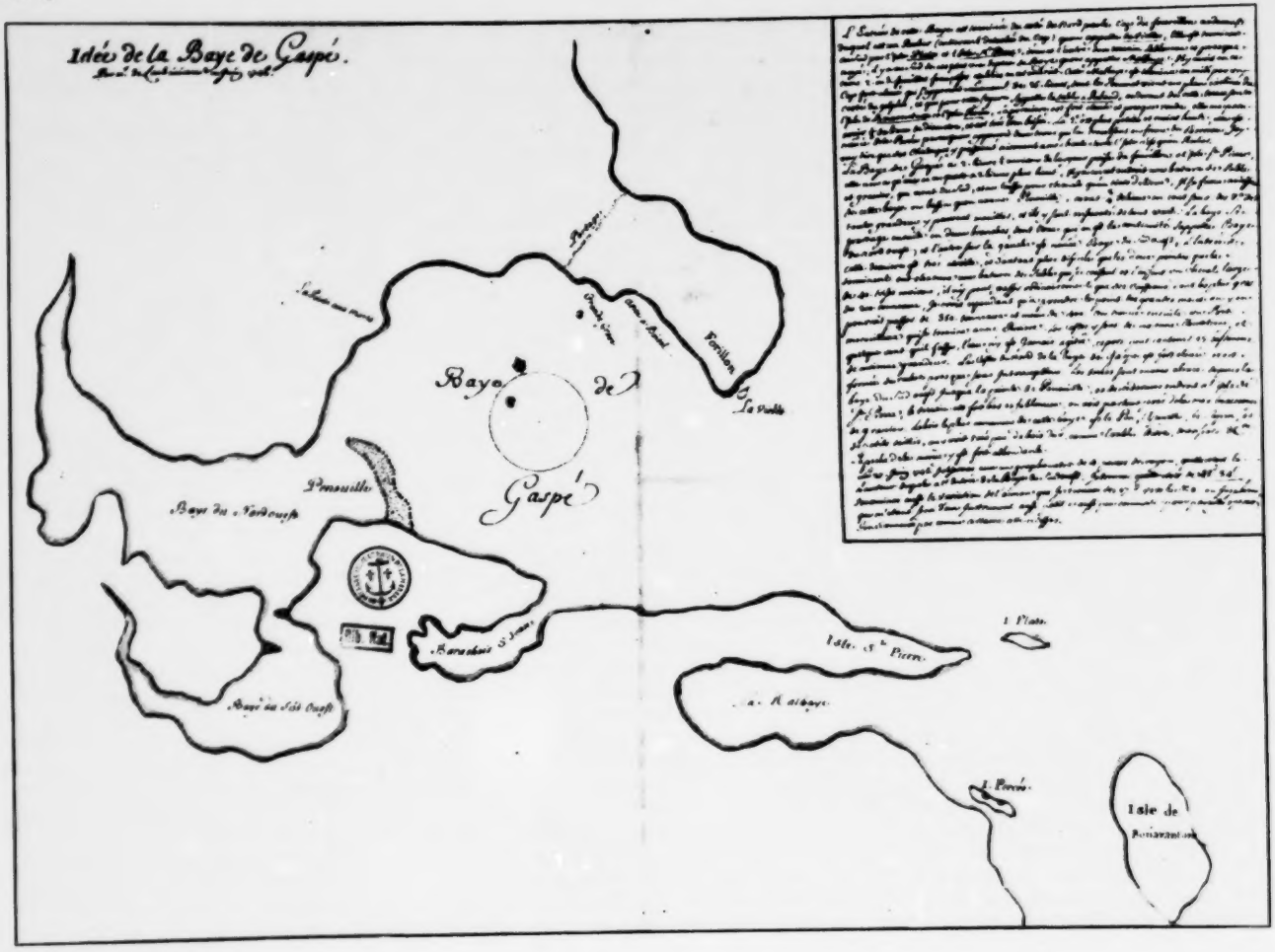
The Bay of Gaspé is the best natural harbour on the Gaspé Peninsula. Large numbers of even the biggest of 18th century ships could anchor within gunshot of the rocky shoreline and the high hills which rim the bay protected them from winds which might dash them upon the rocks. An inner harbour, Baie Penouille, beyond a large sandbar, could provide even more secure shelter. For centuries after Cartier and Champlain, Gaspé Bay attracted ships coming from Europe seeking shelter after long and rough Atlantic crossings. Here they could anchor, rest and repair damage and get fresh water and fuel. So came Brother Sagard and Bishop Laval on their way to Quebec, David Kirke, Hovenden Walker and countless others.

For them it was a stopover en route elsewhere but for many others the voyage was over; now they got to work and fished. Most of the fishing was done outside the bay but the cod was brought back to dry on the excellent beaches. After Percé was wiped out in 1690, Gaspé Bay became the centre of the Gaspé fisheries. The principal attraction of Gaspé Bay was that it was believed to be more denfensible than Ile Percé or other spots along the coast. But English corsairs often merely followed the French fishermen into the bay and seized them there with impunity, for nothing was ever done to fortify the entrance. As early as 1697, Bayonnais fishing ships were captured there.[1] The French fishery at Placentia had fortifications, a small garrison and a warning system, but after Newfoundland was ceded to England, nothing similar was done at Gaspé – but then, the Gaspé fisheries did not expand after the loss of Newfoundland.

Still the French persisted and during the 30 years' peace (1713-44), the fisheries of Gaspé Bay flourished. Louis Gosselin saw 11 ships in the bay in May, 1724. In the 1740s, 40 to 50 fishing vessels were reported at Gaspé Bay and vicinity.[2] This is an exaggeration but it still indicates the importance of this fishery.

It was not until the War of the Austrian Succession (1744-48) that the first win-

4 Sketch of Gaspé Bay, June, 1746. This sketch shows the Gaspé Bay area just before settlement began. The best beaches for drying fish were at Grand-Grève on the north shore of the bay. Beyond the Penouille sandbar was the inner harbour of the bay. *(Original in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*



terings appear to have been attempted in the bay. Sentinels were posted at nearby Cap-des-Rosiers to report on all shipping passing by. At the same time a Canadian named Arbour was reported to be cultivating wheat, buckwheat, hay and various vegetables with some success. He is noted as a permanent resident of the bay and was probably the first.[3]

During the war, Governor Beauharnois and Intendant Hocquart mentioned the possibility of beginning a settlement at the bay, but they knew little about the area. It is significant that, although Gaspé Bay was within the government of Quebec, they had to refer the Minister of Marine to "the Basque and St. Malo captains who visit that quarter every year, [they] will be able to furnish you with more precise information of the advantages to be derived from the settlement in question."[4]

Even without government encouragement, assistance or military works, a substantial settlement grew up around the bay in a short time and by 1754, war was certainly a serious threat again. This time there would not only be fishing ships to attract the English to Gaspé Bay, but there would also be the attractive plunder of a permanent settlement. As well, both English and French were now coming to feel the strategic importance of the Gaspé Peninsula. As Montcalm said after the English had taken Gaspé Bay, "It is the gateway to Canada, its location is infinitely preferable to that of Louisbourg as the key to the colony, as an *entrepôt* and as an important commercial centre."[5]

On 31 October 1754, Governor Duquesne wrote an interesting letter to the Minister of Marine. In it he suspects that the English have designs on "Bay Gaspé which is the best and most important harbour in the colony, since it is situated at the entrance to the St. Lawrence River on the south side by which all shipping passes." He feels that the English want to seize the bay and establish a post there, and "for this sort of thing they are most talented." He has warned the at least 300 permanent residents of the bay to be on the alert. He hesitates to recommend that the government establish fortifications and a garrison there since they would only end up costing three times their worth due to malversation. He reports that some of the residents are willing to fortify and defend the place themselves – with government assistance. He recommends that this plan be followed, for the strengthening of Gaspé Bay will make it easier to attract Acadians back to French territory.[6]

Throughout the 1750s, Gaspé Bay attracted much attention. After years of inattention, suggestions were made for a naval station there to patrol the gulf and control its shipping. The bay itself would be fortified to protect the present fisheries and settlement. An army post could serve as a base for invasions southward into English territory. The security of fortifications and a garrison would allow the bay to be developed as the great *entrepôt* of all New France: sea-going vessels would transfer their cargoes to smaller vessels which could more safely and more quickly navigate the treacherous channels of the St. Lawrence.[7]

A few cannons installed on the Penouille sandbar could have provided a measure of protection to the harbour at little expense or effort. But nothing was done. The settlement itself was not even protected. When war resumed in 1755, it was obvious that fishing in Gaspé Bay was risky and by 1757, no visiting fishermen dared go there.[8] The settlers were unable to offer any resistance when Wolfe arrived the next year. They had made plans to frighten invaders away by fabricating a large Indian village at the entrance to the bay; the settlers would dress up as Indians but they could not fight the English for they had few arms and little ammunition.[9] They made no plans to seek assistance from the Micmacs. But even these plans fell through when the community leader, Pierre Revol, died three days previous to the arrival of Wolfe and his men.

Pierre Revol was the son of the Procurator of the Parlement of Grenoble. He came to Canada in the chains of a smuggler in salt, exiled to the colonies. A fortunate marriage in 1744 to the daughter of a rich seigneur returned him to the standard of life to which he had been accustomed. Marriage brought him important business connections which helped him through several difficulties. In 1748, he was arrested in Martinique for leaving New France without the permission required for a former criminal. In 1756, he invested in a risky fishing venture to Labrador which bankrupted him in six months. Again his friends rescued him financially and the next year arranged that Governor Vaudreuil appoint him as his agent at Gaspé Bay. He was to report on ship movements in the gulf and on means of defending the bay.[10]

Revol had had business in Gaspé Bay before: it was he, along with one André Arnoux, who had spoken for many of the inhabitants when, in 1754, they had offered to do much of the fortification work there for the government.[11] Thus Revol was sufficiently familiar with local conditions to act as the governor's agent and it was he who set up the Indian ruse. His connections were not sufficent, however, to coax supplies of food or arms from the governor, so the settlers could not hope to repulse an invasion. Vaudreuil just did not have the resources to defend Gaspé Bay. He said that he could only hope that the English would not take it without a fight,[12] but even this hope proved to be in vain. Although there might have been a spirit of independence and initiative among the inhabitants it is obvious that for matters like defense, on their own they could not survive. Just as obviously, they could not be dependent on the governor of Quebec.

When the English finally attacked Gaspé Bay in September, 1758, they did so not for strategic purposes. Rather they hoped to divert some French attention from the Lake Champlain frontier, and that it would provide some information on St. Lawrence navigation for an attack on Quebec the following year. When the great English fleet of at least 15 ships entered the bay (4 September 1758), the inhabitants fled into the woods. The first captured was that

5 A view of Gaspé Bay drawn on the spot by Captain Hervey Smyth, 1758. The house on the beach was occupied by Wolfe during his destruction of the Gaspé settlements in 1758. (According to tradition it was the residence of Pierre Revol.) The three piles on the beach to the left of the house represent 1,500 quintals of fish. *(Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Collection No. 39, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.)*

long-time resident, Pierre Arbour; he was sent to bring in the others with a promise of personal safety. The English regiments (the 15th, 28th and 58th) camped on the north shore of the bay, on the Grand-Grève. In the next week most or all of the inhabitants submitted or were taken and their buildings and boats burned. On the twenty-seventh of September, the English returned to their ships and sailed back to Louisbourg with their prisoners. The French had expected the English to occupy and fortify the bay, but apparently the strategic location of Gaspé Bay impressed the French more than the English. However, it is noteworthy that the English came to Gaspé Bay first, and from there sent out expeditions to attack other Gaspé settlements.

The settlement at Gaspé Bay had developed quite quickly and rather quietly after the War of the Austrian Succession. The new settlement is scarcely mentioned in the official French correspondence of the times even though it was growing at such a rapid pace. Governor Duquesne estimated in 1754 that there were "at least 300 inhabitants including wintering fishermen;" and Captain Bell, aide-de-camp to Wolfe, four years later estimated "about 300 inhabitants."[13] Although they must have expected attack, they apparently made no effort to leave the settlement or send away the women or children.

The roll of the refugees arriving in France[14] provides us with the names and origin of 19 male residents of Gaspé, some of them obviously heads of families. We know the origin of 14 of these: the majority were from the St. Malo area and all were from France. There were probably a few Canadians, however, like Pierre Arbour. There is no indication that any Acadians ever reached Gaspé; in 1756, it was reported that a boat carrying 150 Acadians was taken by the English near Gaspé.[15]

Certainly the principal occupation of the inhabitants was fishing. There was some agriculture but it could not have been much for, by 1757, the community had been reduced almost exclusively to a diet of fish.[16] There was also a community of seven houses on what is now the York River centred around a lumber mill.[17] The mill presumably only served the local market. The English also reported a small forge on what is now the Dartmouth River.[18]

The amount of goods, buildings and boats reported destroyed indicates a thriving settlement at Gaspé Bay. Besides the forge and mill (and its lumber), the English also burned a warehouse and many dwellings, including Revol's which apparently was finer than the others. They also seized or destroyed 4 schooners, 200 *chaloupes*, fishing equipment, food supplies, gunpowder, cattle, sheep, ducks and fowl.

Most importantly, they destroyed 6,000 quintals of fish. At Quebec this fish would have been worth perhaps 240,000 *livres*. The fish were no doubt caught by the inhabitants themselves for no fishermen from France had dared go near Gaspé for at least two years. The fish not consumed in the community must have been sold in Quebec, at least in 1758. In other years, some was also probably sold to fishermen visiting from France though the price would have been lower. The amount of fish destroyed by the English is probably considerably less than the total catch for that year: they did not arrive until September, and certainly by then some of the fish must have already been shipped to Quebec. The property destroyed indicates a flourishing settlement, larger than Mont-Louis.

The French origin of most of the inhabitants suggests that the settlement of Gaspé Bay was tied as much to France as it was to Canada. The governor at Quebec had jurisdiction over the settlement but had little to do with it in practice. He had long wanted to assist settlement on the bay but had been unable to do so. It is significant that a community of at least 300 souls could develop and thrive on its own initiative in Gaspé. This sort of development was rare in New France, for normally the government extended its paternal hand into all aspects of life in the colony. This must surely have resulted in a certain spirit of independence among the inhabitants.

Although still important as a fishery, Ile Percé (or Ile Percée as it was spelled in the French regime) is celebrated today more for its rugged scenic beauty. Few visitors to the area during the French regime seem to have appreciated its beauty, though few (after Jacques Cartier) failed to note its geological uniqueness or its rich fisheries.

On 12 July 1534, Cartier spent the night anchored at Ile Bonaventure facing towards Ile Percé; the next morning he continued his voyage north along the Gaspé coast but somehow the pierced rock failed to appeal to his spirit.[1] Champlain was the first European to mention Ile Percé or Ile Bonaventure (1603) and he did not name them, but rather obviously used names already in common use.[2]

It was cod, not beauty or geology, which the European found appealing. During the 17th century, the Percé fisheries were the principal fisheries of Gaspé, attracting at a time up to 11 shiploads of fishermen from France.[3] The Percé fisheries covered all coastal waters from Ile Bonaventure in the south to Baie-des-Morues (Mal-Baie) in the north but the centre was at Ile Percé and the nearby mainland.

Fishing vessels usually anchored in the lee of Ile Percé but even then, as Nicholas Denys laments, they were regularly battered by the seas. As is seen in Figure 6, the cod were dried on what is now known as the south beach of the mainland and usually on flakes, for shingly beaches were rare in this area. Some fish were taken, *en dégrat*, to be cured on the beaches of Gaspé Bay. Nicholas Denys claims, however, that some fishermen went to the trouble of bringing in loads of pebbles to create a shingly beach. Perhaps by Denys' time (1670s), this was easier than erecting flakes, for he says that all the sources of timber for flakes had been cleared from the surrounding area and the men had to go to Baie-des-Morues for wood. Ile Bonaventure itself was used too, but its beach was not extensive.

Still, the good fishing compensated for all these difficulties with the consequence that the beaches became overcrowded and

hostilities resulted. Above the clearings rose La Table à Roland, a forested mountain which, although only about 1,000 feet high, towered above the seashore and provided a prominent beacon for fishermen. The cleared land was subsequently cultivated by the settlers of Pierre Denys' seigneury and found, according to the latter, to be quite fertile. Pierre Denys, however, is not a reliable source as to the qualities of the Percé region for he was trying to attract financial investment and assistance for his seigneury and he paints a much brighter picture of conditions there than was true.[4]

Nicholas Denys wrote of Percé in his famous book *Description and Natural History of Acadia* (1672), describing the wealth of the fisheries, but was less enthusiastic about the potential of a sedentary fishery than his nephew Pierre Denys de la Ronde.[5] In 1653, Nicholas Denys had purchased from the *Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France* for 15,000 *livres* the rights to the coasts and islands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence from Cap-des-Rosiers to Cap Canso. He had this concession confirmed in 1667, but to his death in 1688, he never exercised any control over the Percé region.[6] Nicholas Denys was more interested in the Acadian portion of his concession, but war and financial difficulties limited his interests even there.

In 1672, Pierre Denys, in association with the prominent Quebec merchants, Charles Bazire and Aubert de la Chesnaye, was ceded the seigneury of Percé which included about a square league of the mainland opposite. Talon and Frontenac agreed that it was a promising location for a sedentary fishery, and in 1676 the concession was confirmed. Pierre Denys had majority control of the seigneury, holding three-eights of the grant while Bazire and La Chesnaye held five-eights between them. The grant enjoined them to clear and settle the land and exploit the fisheries but also provided that whatever extent of beach they did not require for their operations must be made available to summer fishermen from France; but they did have first choice of beach lots.[7]

Although operations seem to have begun almost immediately, we have no record of a truly permanent or sedentary fishery there until at least 1676.[8] Pierre Denys has left a detailed inventory of his establishment at Percé which is dated 15 September 1676, but might actually be 1678.[9] He reports four men, a Recollet priest and a married couple resident there at that time. He also reports several buildings at Percé and Petite-Rivière (in Baie-des-Morues), including a storehouse 90 feet long as well as a few cattle, a large garden and over 100 acres cleared and ready to cultivate.

Charles Bazire died in December, 1677, and a memoir written by Denys (probably to the king) a few months later indicates that the establishment at Percé can progress little further without help. He describes the great potential of the Percé fisheries, but then asks for 20,000 *livres* in subsidies, assistance in shipping and a fort and garrison on Ile Percé. It appears that the king was not convinced, even though Frontenac supported Denys' plea. By 1680, Denys was in serious financial difficulty as a result of his large family and the disability of blindness.[10] During the 1680s, the settlement grew only slightly, La Chesnaye seems to have lost interest and Denys' only hope was government assistance.

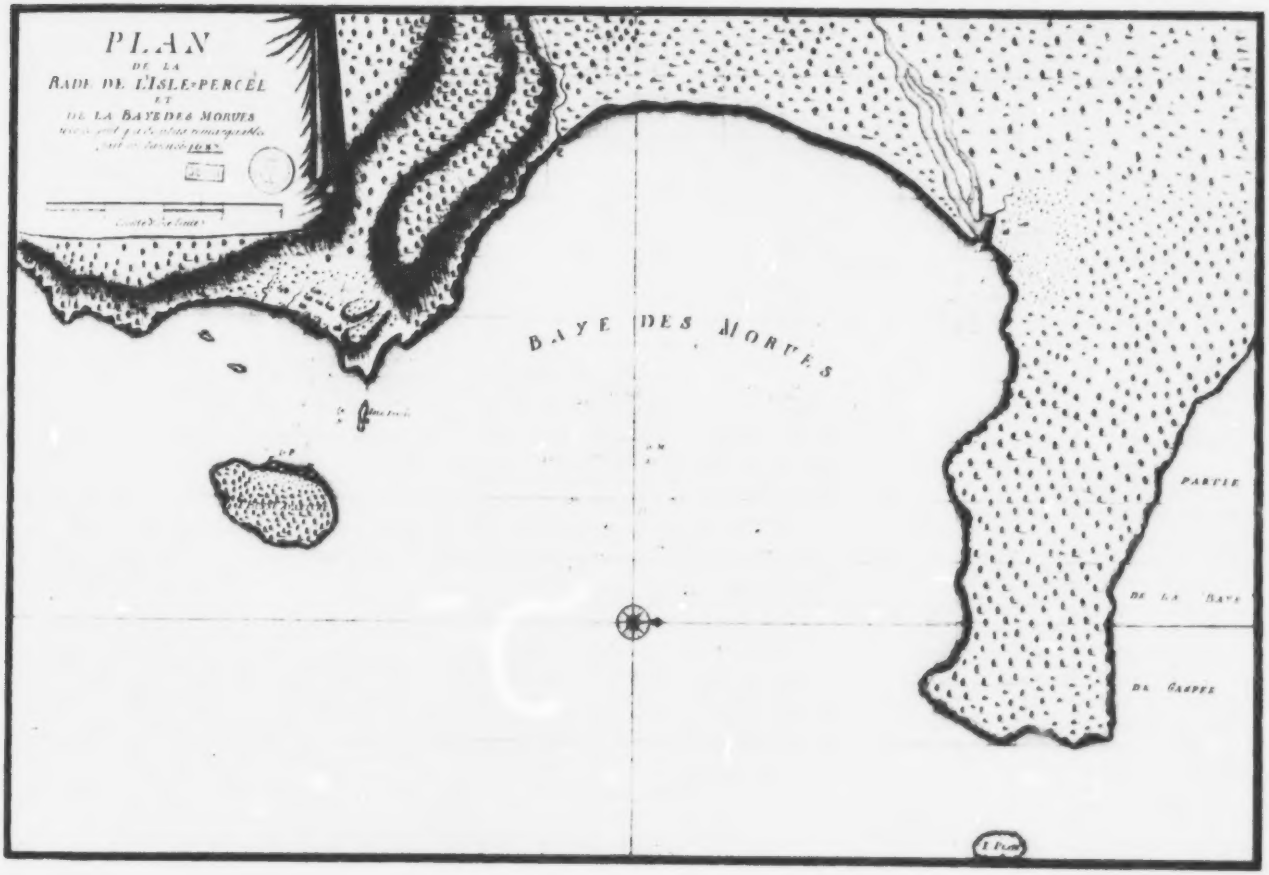
It is obvious that the only part of the Percé fishery which was viable was the summer fishery. A sedentary fishery financed from Canada failed then, possibly because it never could have been a profitable enterprise, but also possibly because there was little capital in Canada which could be attracted to the slower returns of fisheries; the fur trade was more attractive. Thus, the Percé fisheries were dominated by the summer fishermen and remained in the gravitational field of metropolitan France.

Pierre Denys' affairs were assumed by his son, Simon Denys de Bonaventure, and it was he who tried to maintain his father's claims to the seigneury of Percé. Gaspé seigneurial rights were certainly damaged by the 1681 ordinance which declared the area a free fishery, and they were further compromised when De Meulles, in effect, confirmed this policy. Bonaventure complained bitterly but in vain,[11] and within another three years the establishment was wiped out by the English.

War broke out in Europe in the spring of 1689, and it was not long before it was felt in the New World. That summer French fishermen were harassed by English corsairs in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and at Percé.[12] Intrepidly or foolishly, the fishermen returned the next year and six ships (two Rochelais and four Basque) were seized at Percé when it was captured and razed by the English.[13] The Percé fishery never recovered – no permanent settlers ever returned to fish there and the number of summer fishermen from France declined, particularly preferring the safer (though poorer) fishery of Gaspé Bay. Frontenac's plan to establish a military post and a separate government at Ile Percé was turned down by the king in 1693, so those French who did return to Percé continued to risk seizure by the English even in peace time; for example, two ships were captured there in 1723, ten years after peace had been restored. De la Morandière has found that in the 18th century, few French fishing contracts mention ships going to Percé and it seems that there were none there in August, 1711, when Walker's invasion force passed through Gaspé. In 1724, Louis Gosselin reported 23 ships in Gaspé, of which only 8 were at Percé.[14]

The Percé fisheries had never had more than five families permanently resident. Pierre Denys' great plans for extensive settlement never progressed very far but the population remained quite constant. The population was engaged in fishing and some farming. In the decade between 1678 and 1688, some families left but others arrived to replace them, maintaining the population between 20 and 30. The census of 1688 shows that of the adults all were married, one was of unknown origin, two were from Quebec, two from Paris, one from Gascony and four from La Rochelle. It shows that of the 18 children only 6 were girls and the oldest of these was only 11.[15]

6 Plan of the Percé and Baie-des-Morues roadsteads, 1687. This plan provides a larger view of the area than Figure 2 and shows both the Percé settlement and the settlement at Petite-Rivière on the north shore of Baie-des-Morues. *(Original in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.)*



In the summer the population was swelled by 400 to 600 fishermen from France. All were male, of course, and there were no single European female adults for them to associate with. The fishermen had little to do in their free time but gamble and drink or chase Indian women. Both Father LeClercq and Bishop Saint-Vallier felt that the Gaspé Indian women were not naturally free in their sexual behaviour but succumbed to the brandy supplied by the fishermen. LeClercq says that "the Indian women, who yield themselves readily while drunk to all kinds of indecency, at other times . . . would be more likely to strike back rather than kiss those who intended evil, – if they were in their right minds." The fishermen also got the Indians drunk on brandy to secure their furs more easily but, as LeClercq notes, occasionally the Indians drunkenly avenged themselves, "robbing, ravaging and burning the French houses and stores."[16]

Potentially an ever greater danger to the welfare of the fisheries was the drunkenness of the fishermen themselves. It was in the captains' interests to keep their men sober and thereby efficient, so they usually restricted the supply of undiluted wine to Sundays when the men did not work. For the rest of the week their wine was watered down, sometimes to one-third or one-quarter strength. The men were guaranteed a certain amount of wine in their diet (perhaps ten barrels of wine for the five-man team of each *chaloupe*)[17] and they drank it all, often leaving none for the return voyage. Wine was one of the men's few diversions and they drank it in their cabarets, temporary structures which they faithfully erected every year upon arriving at Percé. The gaming, fighting and carousing on Sunday were a source of great scandal to the missionaries: Bishop Saint-Vallier felt it was less sinful to work on Sunday than to visit the cabarets, as long as the men went to church services. The missionaries cannot have been overly hostile to the cabaret operators themselves; often being the only literate residents, they were called on to conduct business for them or compile their accounts.[18] However, the cabarets do not seem to have caused a serious threat to the fisheries for the captains did not feel compelled to do anything more than restrict the supply of wine.[19]

While the captains were successful in governing their men they had more difficulty governing relations among themselves. Despite clear imperial regulations there were difficulties over the use of beach lots at Percé. The wealth of the cod fishery around Percé attracted more fishermen than the local beaches could accommodate, so beach rights were a serious source of tension. Colbert took the time to write into his famous Marine Ordinance of 1681 a specific enjoinder against the stealing of *chaloupes* left over the winter at Petite-Rivière. As well, of course, the ordinance also provided clear rules concerning the rights of the first-arrived ship and the rights of the resident fishermen (there is no indication of trouble between the summer and the resident fishermen), and laws against burning, stealing or damaging the flakes or other structures and equipment.[20]

The troubles continued though, for in 1686, Saint-Vallier felt constrained to point out the penalties, temporal and spiritual, for the theft of property "which impeded the fishery." When the Intendant Jacques De Meulles arrived at Percé returning from an inspection trip through Acadia, he found the situation so serious that the ships "were ready to battle and even cannonade one another." He brought order to the Percé fishery, for that year at least, by providing for such things as pathways between beach lots and a road for carts which everyone could use.[21]

In 1685, the five resident fishermen of Percé complained to Richard Denys, Sieur de Fronsac, son of Nicholas Denys, that Pierre Denys had refused to grant them title to the land they had occupied for several years. They now asked Fronsac to grant them the security of title which they needed to develop the sedentary fishery. Naturally Fronsac was happy to comply for it implied recognition of his father's rights. He granted the settler Lespine (and, it appears, the others as well) title to his land and some for his son too, as well as the right to hunt and trade with the Indians. He provided a common pasture for all settlers and at the same time presumed to grant the seigneur (Pierre Denys) certain fishing rights. Being an absentee authority, Fronsac's pronouncements were obviously worthless.[22]

It is interesting to note the various ways in which attempts were made to exercise authority and settle disputes in the Percé fishery. Attempts to impose the authority of Quebec or Paris proved futile. In 1673, Frontenac tried to hear at Quebec the case of a Basque fisherman accused of murdering a merchant of La Rochelle at Percé; for lack of Basque interpreters the case had to be transferred to the Admiralty Court of La Rochelle.[23] The 1681 Ordinance of Marine provided for the same legal procedure in the case of offenses against the fisheries, but this kind of justice was far too slow. Moreover, in remote Percé it was difficult to catch offenders and, as a result, the area became a haven for fugitives. One of Denys' settlers lived with impunity for several years at Percé in contempt of a sentence for bad debts at Quebec.[24] Other fugitives used Percé as a sanctuary where they could meet ships which would take them back to France. Quebec and Paris had little control over the region.[25]

It was difficult to ascertain who had on-the-spot authority at Percé but nevertheless the fishermen muddled through. Frequently it was impossible to attempt to render any justice at all. The five resident fishermen who were concerned about their land tenure did not appeal to Quebec but to Nicholas Denys, but even he was unable to help them. Father LeClercq and Bishop Saint-Vallier appealed to God for justice when they visited Percé, but they also hoped for some sort of temporal authority. De Meulles tried to fill this gap when he visited Percé in 1686; he tried to make it possible to settle contraventions of the law

on the spot by providing that fines be paid to the church at Percé. But he still lacked a means of enforcement. Pierre Denys had seigneurial powers over justice but his position had been made debatable by the ordinance of 1681 and De Meulles' regulations. His son, Joseph, was the missionary at Percé but even he had little influence over the fishermen. His bishop in effect advised him to pass on the responsibility: he told him that if he were incapable of keeping the cabarets closed during services, then he should enlist the aid of the secular authorities.[2]

The Percé fisheries seem to have had a lot of troubles: gambling, drunkenness, difficulties with Indians, local residents and fugitives from justice and even troubles among the fishermen themselves. Still, order does not seem to have broken down entirely. In the end the fishermen themselves must have realized that they had to work out their difficulties among themselves. Perhaps they used royal ordinances and Intendant's regulations as guides but, since we hear of none of the violence which De Meulles expected, we must assume that they learned to govern themselves. Canadian governors and European monarchs were too distant to help so, if the fisheries were to continue to function, there was no alternative to self-policing at Percé. Economically Percé might have been dependent on France but governmentally it was, in practice, independent.

The eastern coastline of Gaspé affords few harbours large enough to shelter seagoing fishing vessels. Fishermen preferred to anchor at Port Daniel or Paspébiac but the best beaches and harbours on this coast were in the bays of Pabos and Grande-Rivière. Into these bays flowed large rivers whose alluvia were deposited at their mouths forming typical Gaspé *barachois* or lagoons. These lagoons had good beaches and good fishing nearby; they were spacious but could admit only shallow-draught *chaloupes*. But Pabos and Grande-Rivière became more than typical Gaspé fishing stations: they grew into substantial settlements of resident fishermen. Many ships came from France every year to fish or buy fish caught by local fishermen.

Perhaps the success was due to the energies of its seigneurs. Jean-François Lefebvre de Bellefeuille and his sons François and Georges were the only Gaspé seigneurs who lived on their land for a long period. The Bellefeuille family seems to have settled people along the coastline from Pabos to Grande-Rivière (about 10 miles) even though their seigneurial grant included only the area around Baie-de-Pabos. They appear to have purchased the seigneury from the heirs of René Hubert around 1729 and held it until after the Conquest. Thirty years of permanent residence on their land must have given them particular knowledge about the character and resources of Gaspé which made their settlement succeed.

The Bellefeuilles began to gather settlers at Pabos quite early, for 30 inhabitants are reported resident there in 1730.[1] The population must have increased over the years but we have no accurate figures. The English made no estimate of their numbers because Bellefeuille and many of his settlers fled into the woods when the English troops arrived (1758), and were never taken; however, since Captain Bell noted that they burned 27 houses at Pabos and 60 at Grande-Rivière,[2] there must have been at least 200 people in the community.

Wolfe was angry that his men burned the houses and thus caused the inhabitants to flee, understandably expecting no quarter. He sent a *chaloupe* back to the area to assure the safety of the settlers but got no response. We do not know their fate except that François Bellefeuille was still alive in 1765, when he sold his seigneury to Frederick Haldimand.[3]

It is obvious that by 1758, Grande-Rivière was a more considerable settlement than Pabos. Captain Bell reports that the Bellefeuille manor house was at Grande-Rivière. The English destroyed 10,000 quintals of fish and 80 *chaloupes* at Grande-Rivière while at Pabos they destroyed only 3,500 quintals of fish and 40 *chaloupes*. The destruction reported indicates a large and flourishing community, for the damage also included considerable fishing equipment, food and clothing provisions, salt (for the fish), livestock and 60 casks of molasses.[4]

The twin communities of Pabos and Grande-Rivière were served in the 1750s by two or three missionaries. The parish register for the years 1751-56 still exists.[5] It provides us with the names of nearly 100 residents of the area and, although this is obviously an incomplete list, it reveals some interesting aspects of the local society.

During these five years we know of twelve deaths, half of which were either through drownings or shipwreck. All were adult males, except one female infant. The mortality of only one infant in 19 births indicates a healthy community with good diet and accommodation. These are very incomplete figures but they indicate an infant mortality rate in Gaspé of only 52 deaths per 1,000 live births. In comparison, the infant mortality rate in New France for the same period was about 246 per 1,000.[6] Furthermore, there were no deaths of mothers at childbirth either. The other deaths naturally left several widows but many of the men were not married anyhow. In fact, adult men outnumbered women on the parish register by 48 to 29. There was one single female of marriageable age but she was the sister of the seigneur. Perhaps a seigneur's sister did not feel the economic necessity to marry as strongly as females of lower economic levels.

In this remote part of New France there were few people of equal social standing for the Bellefeuilles to socialize with. It was, no doubt, the isolation of Gaspé which prevented most seigneurs from residing on their concessions, yet the Bellefeuille family stayed there for nearly 30 years. However, by the 1750s, at least, they had a large family. The Lefebvre de Bellefeuilles of Gaspé, it appears from Tanguay,[7] were late-comers to New France. Tanguay says that Jean-François Lefebvre de Bellefeuille came to Canada from Rheims in France. He had at least two and probably three sons but after he died (sometime between 1745 and 1752), it was François who carried on his work. In 1749, François was commissioned agent of the Intendant of Quebec for the Gaspé coast and Bay of Chaleurs. The same year he married Marie-Joseph Hertel Cournoyer, a member of a prominent Canadian family, at Trois-Rivières; they had at least 11 children.[8]

François presided over a large seigneurial family at Pabos in the 1750s. Living in the community with him were his widowed mother, his unmarried brother and sister and his second sister and her husband whom she married in Gaspé in 1753. During this period a nephew and at least two of his four children were born in Gaspé. For her later children, those born in 1756 and 1757, Mme. Bellefeuille journeyed back home to Trois-Rivières, probably because of the imminent danger of English invasion. When she was in Gaspé she faithfully performed her seigneurial obligations, such as being witness to the baptisms and marriages of many of the settlers. Unlike some seigneurs elsewhere in New France, the Bellefeuilles did not live as poorly as their tenants; in fact, the English attackers indicated that the seigneurial manor house which they plundered was large and well furnished.[9]

In 1737, Georges Lefebvre de Bellefeuille was commissioned with the duties of *subdélégué de l'intendant*, agent of the Intendant, in Gaspé. His function was to settle disputes which arose among both the resident fishermen and the visiting summer fishermen.[10] Sometimes residents took their cases to the Intendant at Quebec who then simply turned around and ordered Bellefeuille to settle the matter.[11] As well, occasionally Bellefeuille was asked to enforce decisions which the Intendant had made[12] but, as we saw earlier, Bellefeuille did not always obey and there was little the Intendant could do about it. By the 1750s, when war was imminent, his brother François was the *sub-délégué*; François was given the additional and unspecified military duty of "Commandant for the King for the whole coast of Gaspé and Baie des Chaleurs."[13]

There were only a few residents of the area who could approach the Bellefeuilles in social standing. In this second group must certainly be included Jean Barré of Granville in Normandy. He was noted as a prominent resident as early as 1747, when he was entrusted with organizing a guard and lookout in response to the threat of English attack.[14] He is noted variously as an *habitant*, fisherman and ship's captain. In the Gaspé context, "ship's captain" most likely indicates he owned his own fishing vessel, something larger than a mere *chaloupe*. Although he (and his wife) appears to have been illiterate (i.e., he could not sign his own name), he continued to be recognized as a prominent resident throughout the 1750s and in 1759, after Gaspé had been ravaged, the government entrusted him with the captaincy of a relief ship sent to Canada from Bordeaux.[15]

If there were others in this second social group, they would be those men who had property or responsible positions. First, there would be the missionaries. These men were responsible for an enormous parish extending from Shediac in what is now New Brunswick to Kamouraska which is well up-river from Rimouski; still they chose to reside at Grande-Rivière (rather than at other central locations like Pabos, Gaspé Bay or Mont-Louis), presumably to be near the centre of society and authority. As well, there would be the *maîtres de chaloupe* who, in the Gaspé context, probably owned their own *chaloupes* or were entrusted with one by another owner. An ordinance of October, 1746, indicates that at least some of the inhabitants must have owned their own *chaloupes*.[16] Then there were the *maîtres de grave* who were responsible for allocating beach lots and directing the drying operations there. Also mentioned in the parish records is an *écuier* (with no elaboration on the source of his income) and a *bourgeois* (perhaps a merchant or importer?). These men were all literate (enough, at least, to write their names) and probably constituted the only residents with whom the Bellefeuilles would mix socially.

The parish records show, however, that there were many residents not in the first two social groups who also could write. This is a surprising number but, of course, they all seem to have come from France where educational standards were presumably higher than those one would expect to see among people raised in the New World. We know the origin of nearly 20 of these ordinary fishermen and almost all of them come from Normandy or Brittany. This third (and largest) social group included a few specialized occupations, such as carpenter, but it consisted principally of ordinary fishermen who did not own their own *chaloupes* but worked for the seigneur or the other *chaloupe* owners.

We do not know if Bellefeuille was the principal *chaloupe* owner or if he actually owned any, but we do know that he was the wealthiest resident in all of Gaspé. We know nothing of his seigneurial land arrangements with the settlers of his grant. Normally a seigneur's wealth lay in his land but here there was little agriculture practised (Captain Bell says that the settlers had only small gardens of turnips and cabbages and some livestock). Bellefeuille presumably exacted one-eleventh of the fish caught by his settlers as his seigneurial right. Leasing beach lots to visiting French fishermen would also have been an attractive supplement to his income. His titles as the Intendant's agent and Commandant do not seem to have brought in any money but they must have added to his social standing.

Pabos, Grande-Rivière flourished because its seigneur lived permanently on his concession where he could direct its affairs personally. Personal direction was necessary, for only a resident could recognize the line of development which the distinctive or particular resources of Gaspé required. To flourish, a seigneury also required the direction of someone with the capital needed for initial investment in buildings and boats. The direction could not come from a wealthy seigneur living in Quebec or Trois-Rivières, nor from the government. And there is no evidence that Bellefeuille received any government assistance; he must have used his own money. Even though his money may initially have come from Quebec and even though he may have retained his family bonds in Canada, his seigneury, once established, naturally became economically bound to France and its market for cod. Again the result was that Gaspé residents lived a life almost independent of their titular superiors at Quebec.

Bellefeuille and most of his settlers lived at Grande-Rivière which was outside his seigneury of Pabos but the government did nothing about this squatting; it did not care, or perhaps, even know about it. It went further and relinquished to Bellefeuille judicial and military authority extending far beyond his seigneury. Pabos and Grande-Rivière were remote outposts and the government was only interested in them when Quebec was threatened by English attack. They received no assistance from the government but still grew into a much more substantial community than historians have heretofore thought.

It is obvious that the dry cod fisheries of New France were valuable to the mother country, but how valuable was the Gaspé fishery in itself? Until 1713, the dry fisheries of Placentia in Newfoundland were more important, attracting perhaps around 50 ships a year.[1] An English account of 1745 claims that the Cape Breton fisheries, which France developed after the loss of Newfoundland, filled 93 ships with cod exported to France. De la Morandière's figures indicate a slightly smaller number of shiploads.[2] In comparison, the number of French fishing ships coming to the Gaspé dry fisheries was certainly smaller. Although they favoured various Gaspé harbours at various periods in the century between 1660 and 1760, the number remained fairly constant (in peacetime) at about 20 to 25 ships per year.[3] Thus, the Gaspé fisheries provided France with roughly from a third to a fifth of the cod dried on the beaches of New France. Most of the dried cod was exported and there is no doubt that it was a valuable contribution to France's balance of trade. Along with the green fishery, the industry strengthened the nation's military potential for it stimulated shipbuilding and provided a cheap and durable staple for the navy.

With respect to Canada, though, the Gaspé fisheries were only of minimal importance. In the 1750s, places like Mont-Louis and occasionally Gaspé Bay sent dried cod to Quebec. This local source meant that less food provisions had to be imported from France at a time when the price of fish and other food products was steadily climbing. But, since Gaspé was as much a part of the French economy as it was a part of the Canadian economy, the amount of Gaspé cod consumed in Canada was never able to help Canada's balance of trade problem with France. Nor was it able to keep the price of cod in Canada in balance with the price in France. Mont-Louis supplied the Canadian market for cod and got its supplies there; Gaspé Bay participated in both the Canadian and French markets; but Percé, Pabos and Grande-Rivière were economically tied more to France and most of their population originated there. They sold their cod directly to French fishing vessels and in return could procure at least some of their imports, like fishing equipment, from them. In the 1730s, several shipments of food, lumber and shingles were sent from Quebec to Gaspé.[4] There is no reason to believe that food shipments continued, for after 1740, Canada experienced numerous crop failures and severe food shortages due to war, pestilence and bad weather. Besides, as the Gaspé settlements became more firmly established, they would have been able to supply many of their basic needs from their own gardens, forests and fisheries – and Gaspé Bay had its own sawmill. If the Gaspé fisheries had been more important to Canada's economy, the government of Quebec surely would have done something to protect them from the continuing danger of English attack. When the government considered defensive measures for Gaspé, it was not to protect the fisheries but to defend Gaspé as the approach to the heart of Canada.

Michilimackinac and the Ohio Valley were more remote from Quebec than Gaspé, yet in comparison they were more closely tied to Canada. All three exported their products to France but the interior posts had to export their products (furs) through Canada to France. We know of no Gaspé fish ever being exported to France through Canada. The government of Canada (at Quebec) had titular authority in Gaspé but as settlement grew on the peninsula, the government came to recognize that Gaspé was a region of New France, different and distinct from Canada. As time went by, the government relinquished more and more of its authority in Gaspé. In 1685, the king recognized that Gaspé was not suited to the fur trade like Canada and declared free trade in furs in that region. At about the same time, at Ile Percé, there was an apparent total lack of order and the governor at Quebec was unable to help; in the end the fishermen had to learn to police themselves. Quebec was unable to stop furs or fugitives from being smuggled out of New France by way of Ile Percé. At Pabos the

local seigneur was given judicial and military powers beyong his seigneurial grant, and on the few occasions that Quebec did send him orders, he did not always feel constrained to carry them out. Lefebvre de Bellefeuille became almost the *de facto* governor. It is interesting to note that only a few years later the English recognized the distinctiveness of Gaspé: under the English, Gaspé had its own lieutenant-governor until 1833. As a result of the neglect by Quebec, the inhabitants of Gaspé came to expect no assistance from the government of Canada. Fur traders and other entrepreneurs in Canada received special privileges and aid, but fishermen settled in Gaspé with no government help or even encouragement and yet by the 1750s their numbers had grown to 500 or 600. To this number should also be added perhaps another 600 fishermen who came from France every year to fish.

The government at Quebec was more interested in the fur trade and agricultural settlement for they were considered sounder foundations for colonial development. Despite the early experience of the Rochelais at Matane and the king's declaration of 1685 on the Gaspé fur trade, it took a long time for the French to realize that Gaspé was different from the rest of Canada. Riverin's bad experience at Mont-Louis shows that it was not suited to the fur trade but rather to fishing. And Riverin also knew that agriculture in Gaspé should only be thought of as a supplement to fishing. Nor did Gaspé ever support mining or lumbering enterprises.

The dependence of Gaspé on dry cod resulted in a society much different from Canadian society which operated on a more diversified economy. Still, the fishing community at Pabos may have enjoyed a health record better than the rest of New France indicating that its people enjoyed a higher standard of living. The English reported that Bellefeuille at Pabos, Revol at Gaspé Bay and Maillet at Mont-Louis also seem to have enjoyed a good material standard of living; it was probably better than the average Canadian seigneur. Life in Gaspé was also different in that the seigneurs and their settlers made their living not from the land, as in Canada, but from the sea, and they seldom ventured out of sight of the sea. Moreover it was a society tied by family bonds to France and not New France.

The life of the other residents of Gaspé, the Indians, changed as French settlement grew, but not to the extent of the Indians in the rest of New France. This was because there was so little fur trade in Gaspé but also because Gaspé Indians were exposed to the teachings of Christian missionaries for only a short period, and were never drawn into wars with the English. As a result, even by 1758, the Micmacs of Gaspé had not been acculturated to the extent of, for example, the Hurons or the distant Ottawas or even the Micmacs of Acadia. At the same time this minimal contact meant that the presence of Indians in Gaspé had little reciprocal effect on the French of Gaspé. Thus, the historical experience of the Gaspé Micmacs was decidedly different from the experience of the Indians of the rest of New France.

The French experience in Gaspé is probably more similar to their experience in Newfoundland than anywhere else in New France. Both developed economies exclusively dependent on dry cod due to the forbidding terrain of their hinterlands. As well, they both combined resident and visiting fisheries. But they differed in other ways as, for example, the French did not extend the seigneurial system to Newfoundland. The Newfoundland fisheries were also more important to France and thus evidently deserved military protection and a true civil government. Fishing was important to the French colony in Acadia, too, but not to the exclusive extent of Gaspé, for Acadia was always basically agricultural.

The historical experience of Gaspé was shaped by the forces of both metropolitanism and frontierism. The Gaspé economy was subject to two metropolitan forces – that of France and that of Quebec – whose importance was nearly equal. At the same time the isolation of Gaspé and its peculiar geographic characteristics fostered the growth of a frontier spirit of independence and self-policing. In any case there is no doubt that the historical experience of the French in Gaspé was different from their experience in any other region or colony of New France. Gaspé was almost a colony in itself.

Abbreviations Used in the Endnotes

BRH	*Bulletin des Recherches Historiques.*
JR	Jesuits. Letters from Missions (North America). *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents.* Ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites. Burrows Bros., Cleveland.
PAC	Canada. Public Archives.
RAPQ	Quebec (Province) Archives. *Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec.* King's Printer, Quebec.
RHAF	*Revue de l'Histoire de l'Amérique Française.*
RHG	*Revue d'Histoire de la Gaspésie.*
TRSC	*Royal Society of Canada, Transactions.*

Endnotes

Introduction

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The Armstrong Mound on Rainy River, Ontario

by Walter A. Kenyon

Abstract

The Armstrong Mound, one of several mounds overlooking the Long Sault Rapids on Rainy River, Ontario, was excavated in 1966 at the request of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. The purpose of the excavation was to inform the Board of the nature of the mounds and their relative age and cultural affiliation with relation to possible commemoration of the site.

Walter Kenyon of the Royal Ontario Museum directed the work. He excavated one mound 80 feet in diameter and 8 feet high, in which he found several burials, stone and copper artifacts, and numerous fragments of pottery. The author associates the mound itself with the Late Laurel culture and dates its construction to about 1,000 years ago.

Acknowledgements

The excavation of the Armstrong Mound was made possible through the courtesy of Mr. John Barsy, Reno, Nevada and Mr. George Armstrong, Fort Frances, Ontario, both of whom granted us permission to camp and to excavate on their property. Mr. Alex Barsy, Rainy River, Ontario, was extremely helpful in assisting us with many of the detailed arrangements that had to be made locally. Mr. R. J. MacDonald and his wife, Ethel, of Stratton, Ontario, assisted us materially on many occasions, and by their unfailing hospitality made our work much more pleasant than it would otherwise have been. All maps, plans and drawings are by Mr. Claus Breede, Office of the Chief Archaeologist, Royal Ontario Museum, University of Toronto. To all of them I am extremely grateful. I would like to acknowledge, also, my gratitude to one of the finest crews that I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

Introduction

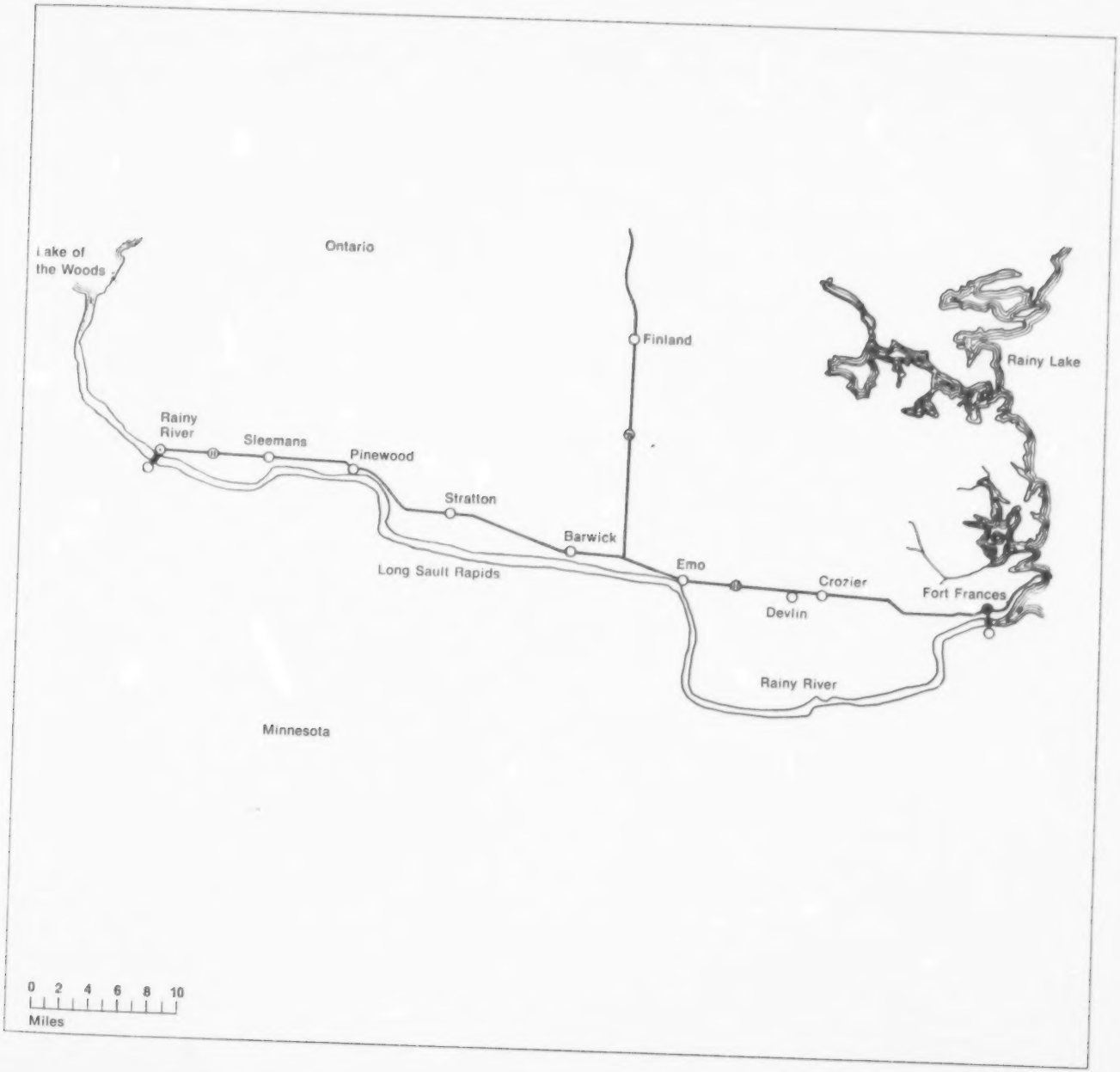
The Armstrong Mound (Royal Ontario Museum Code No. L.S.M. – 7) is one of a group of at least 11 Indian burial mounds scattered along the north bank of Rainy River (Fig. 1) at the Long Sault Rapids (Fig. 2) some 32 mi. west of Fort Frances, Ontario. The mounds are located on "Plan SM-74, being a sub-division of Long Sault Indian Reserves Nos. 12 and 13, Chapple Township, Rainy River District, Ontario." The mound is located specifically on the boundary between the Chapple Township road allowance and Lot 30, 275 ft. north from Rainy River (Fig. 3). Its geographic coordinates are N. 48° 30′ 48.4″ and W. 94° 4′ 22.5″.

The Armstrong Mound, with which this report is primarily concerned, is part of a large site complex. The larger site appears to consist of a number of separate and overlapping camp and village sites scattered along the Ontario shore of Rainy River for a distance of 1.5 mi. At present, it is not known whether the deposit of cultural debris is continuous or discontinuous, as very little testing has been done. We do know, however, that the horizontal distribution of material is extensive, that it extends inland from the river for 300 ft. in places, and that the eastern edge of the site is stratified, with Blackduck overlying Laurel materials. The deepest deposit encountered in the very limited testing that has been done does not exceed 14 in.

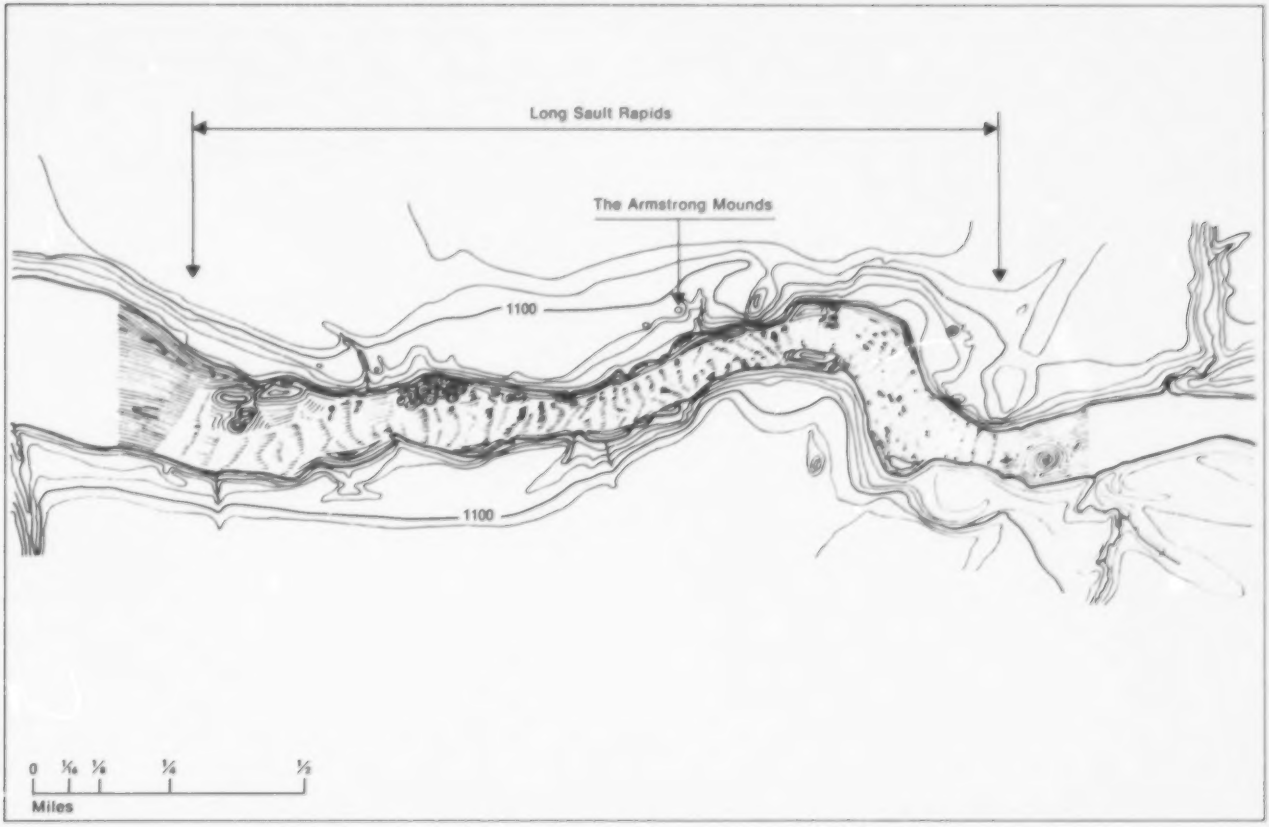
The most salient features of the site are the burial mounds, which are of two basic types. A number of small low mounds can probably be attributed to the Blackduck occupation. Although these have not yet been adequately surveyed, it is highly improbable that any of them exceeds 30 ft. in diameter or 30 in. in height. There are a number of larger and relatively higher mounds which were built by the earlier Laurel peoples. Most of these are over 50 ft. in diameter and 6 ft. in height. The largest is 113 ft. in diameter and 24 ft. high.

The earliest material yet found at the site can be attributed with reasonable accuracy to the Plains Archaic period, and dated at roughly 6,000 B.C. (Kenyon and Churcher

1 Location of Long Sault Rapids on Rainy River



2 Location of Armstrong Mound at Long Sault Rapids.

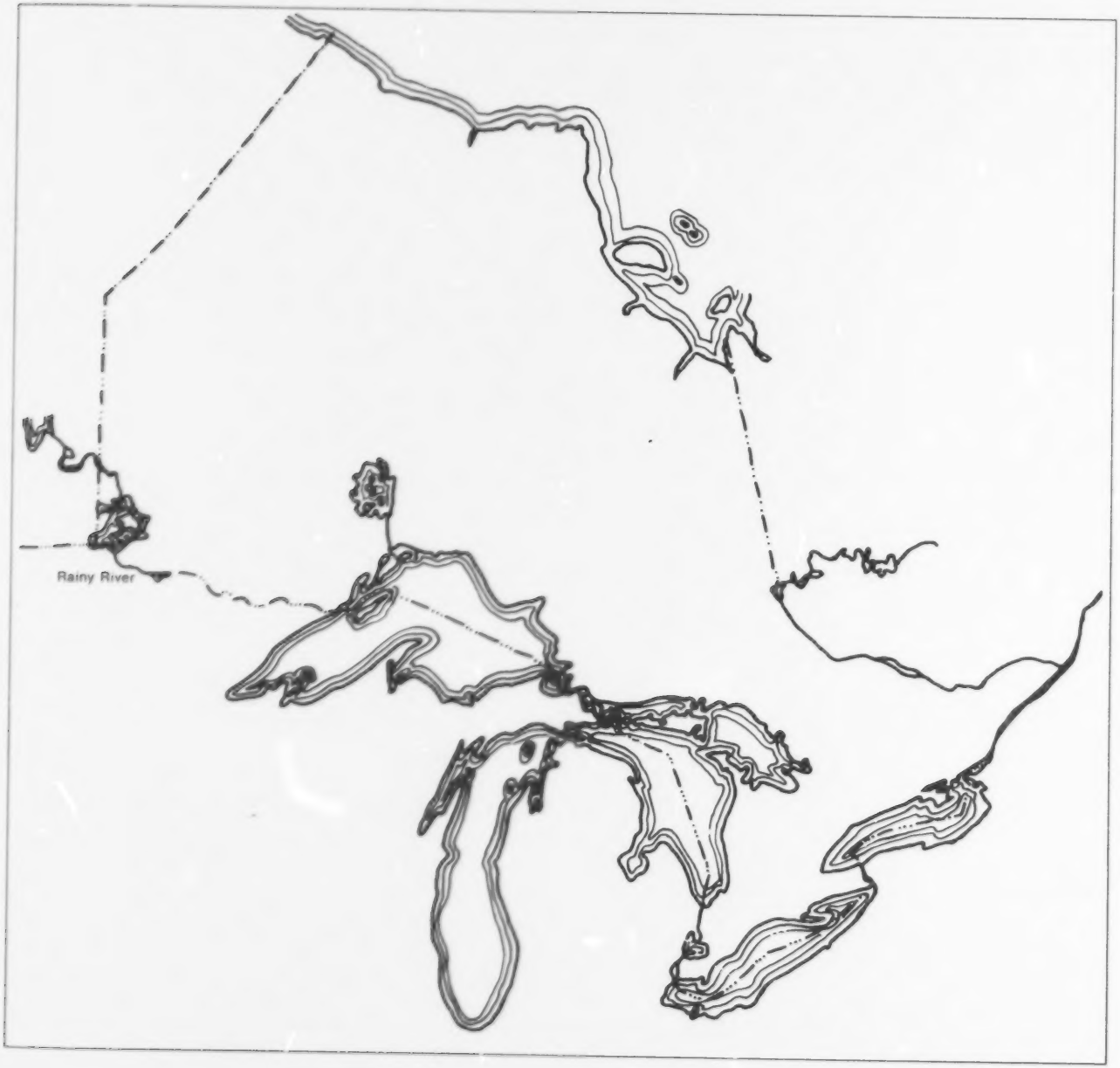


1965). A number of bone and antler harpoons, grooved axes and large copper implements have been picked up along the river bank from time to time, but these cannot be assigned to any particular occupation at present. The most recent material of archaeological significance at the site consists of burials dating from the fur trade period. Although we have no reason to believe that the occupation of the site has been continuous, we do know that it has been occupied intermittently for some 8,000 years, and we can be fairly confident that it has been a religious and ceremonial centre for the last 2,000 years.

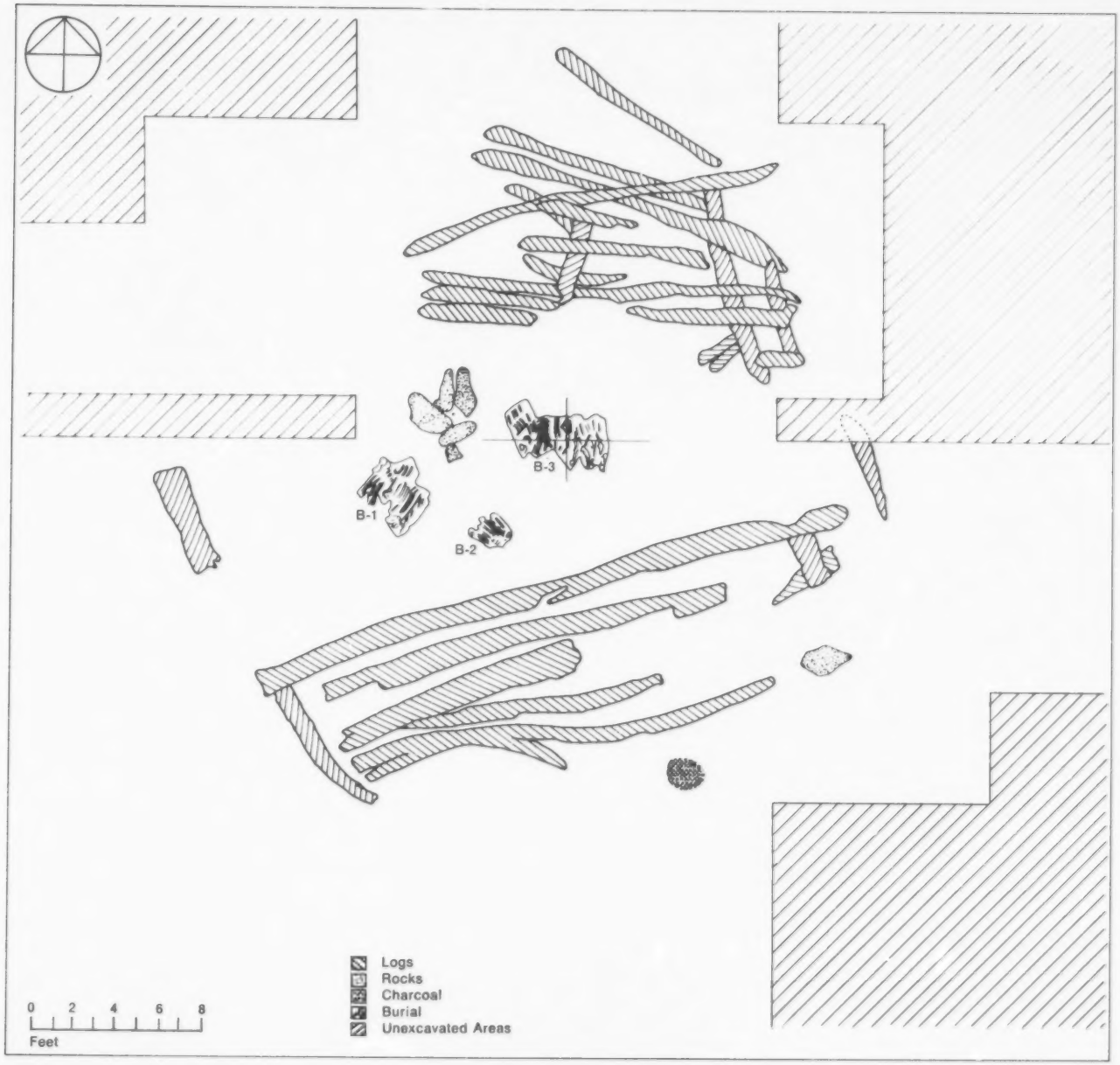
In addition to these considerations, the site is important simply because the mounds are visible. Most of Canada's prehistoric archaeological sites have neither mounds nor other earthworks. While these sites are important to the prehistorian, they cannot normally be used as visual aids in an educational program. At the Long Sault Rapids, on the other hand, the mounds stand forth boldly as man-made structures. Their very massiveness is impressive.

The value of the Long Sault site as a unique record of Canadian history cannot be seriously questioned – both the length of occupation and the diversity of the cultures that are present attest to its importance – but like a gold mine, it is of no value unless it is worked.

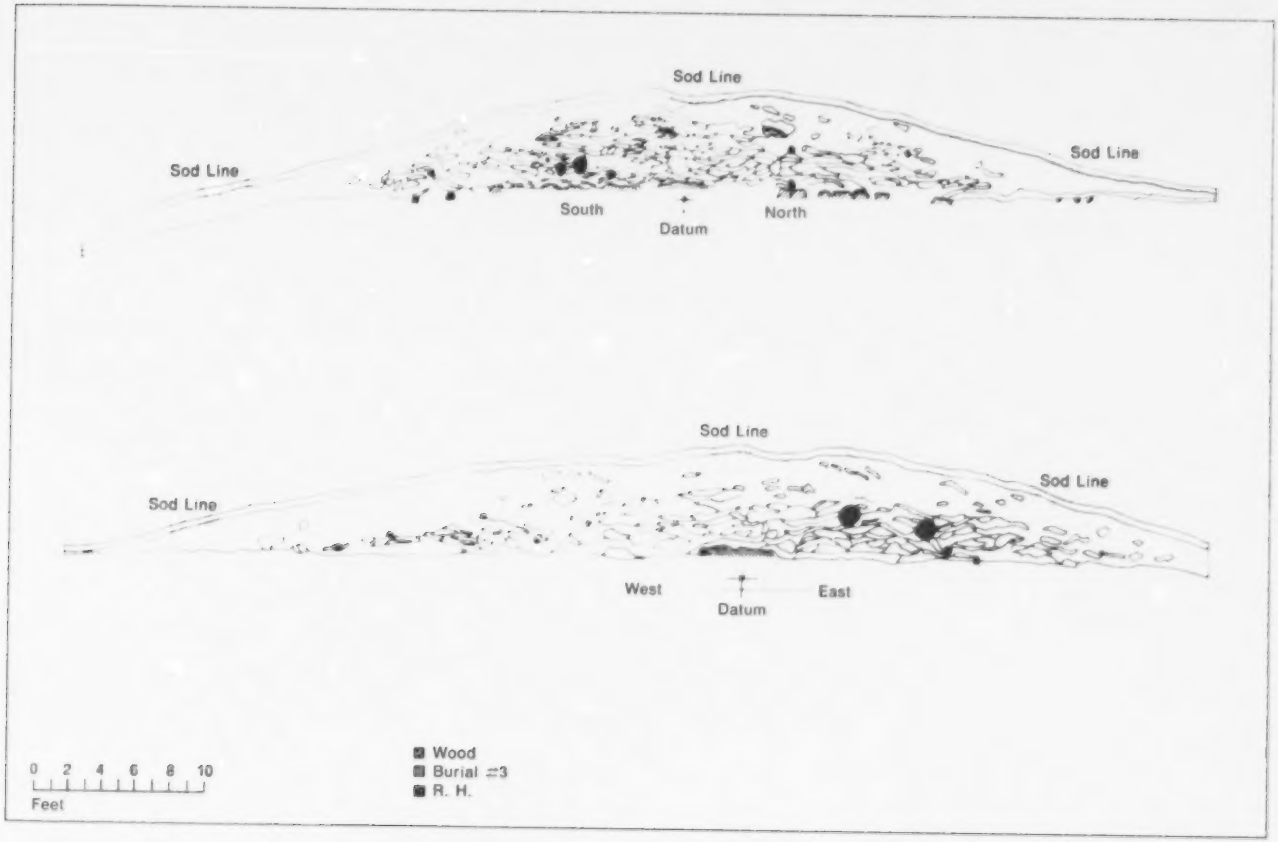
3 Location of Rainy River.



4 Floor plan at the base of the mound.



5 Vertical profiles through the mound.



The Armstrong Mound is situated on the edge of a relatively flat terrace that rises 26 ft. above Rainy River. (Elevations are relative to water level south of the mound on June 8, 1966.) About 215 ft. from the edge of the river, the terrace drops off sharply to an old flood plain which is also relatively flat, and which rises 10 ft. above the river. On a topographic map, the mound is located just below the 1,100-ft. contour line.

Although the mound stands on the edge of a clearing, brush and young trees had encroached upon its eastern edge. Here was a dense thicket of hazel and wild plum, with a few poplars up to 10 in. in diameter, and a scattering of young bur oak.

When the mound had been cleared of brush and trees, a stake was driven into what appeared to be the centre of the structure. Using this as a reference point, a 10-ft. grid was superimposed on the mound and a contour map was drawn with a one-foot contour interval. The basic grid was oriented so there would be a minimum of stumps and roots on these balks which we knew in advance would be profiled. (In this report, all directional references are grid references; grid N. bears 18½° west of astronomic N., and 25° west of magnetic N.)

The mound was almost circular in outline, with a north-south diameter of 63 ft. and an east-west diameter of 67 ft. It was 6 ft. high, and contained approximately 756 cu. yd. of earth.

We knew from previous experience in the Rainy River District that the mound fill would be largely sterile: that is, we expected the fill to contain some habitation refuse, but we expected that the amount would be relatively small. We decided, therefore, to excavate the mound by shovel. This technique proved satisfactory and was used throughout the excavation, except for the detailed work at the base of the mound

and the single intrusive burial that was encountered.

We had planned to leave a two-foot balk standing on the north-south and east-west centre lines, thus dividing the mound into four sectors, or quadrants, for excavation. Because of a technical error, however, the east-west balk was left one foot north of its planned position.

In order to define the archaeological problem as early in the excavation as possible, a line of 10-ft. squares was cut into the mound from its western edge, immediately south of the east-west balk. These squares were excavated to undisturbed subsoil. As we approached the centre of the structure, wood fibres were encountered on the upper surface of the old sod line at the base of the mound. Leaving approximately a foot of earth to cover the wood, we then excavated the upper portions of the trench to the north-south balk. Finally we removed the protective layer of earth and exposed the wood with trowels and brushes. The same procedure was followed in the other three quadrants, thus exposing a crude rectangle of logs which were found to enclose three separate burials (Fig. 4). (Actually, we did not proceed in such an orderly manner, but shifted constantly from one quadrant to another because of the fact that rain water tended to collect in our lower trenches.)

In addition to these logs which were measured and plotted with reasonable accuracy, a thin layer of wood fibres covered the rectangle which was defined by the outer logs. This layer probably resulted from a layer of brush which had been scattered within the rectangle after the logs had been placed on the sod, but before the three burials had been deposited there. Evidently the mound-builders first outlined a rectangular plot near the edge of the upper river terrace, then scattered some brush or twigs within the rectangle. Next they placed three separate burials on top of the thin scattering of brush, and finally constructed the mound. This sequence of events was established by determining that the layer of brush – that is the short wood fibres which were randomly oriented – was superimposed on the logs' but was beneath the burials.

A vertical face through the mound (*see* Fig. 5) shows that the structure was built up as a unit with individual basket-loads of earth. The mottled effect results from the fact that some loads were largely a thick, black humus; some were the light tan clay which is the characteristic subsoil of which the terrace is formed, and others were a mixture of the two. We were able to identify the containers as "baskets" because we found, near the base of the mound, some four feet west of its centre, the clear imprint of birchbark separating a lens of clay from a lens of humus. Almost certainly, the bearer had decided that the basket was no longer serviceable and had simply tossed the container with its contents upside down on the growing heap of earth. The absence of lensing near the upper surface of the mound is probably due to leaching.

Two of the four burials associated with the mound were multiple secondary burials. None contained grave furniture. In addition to the three burials listed below (Fig. 4), parts of a disturbed intrusive burial were found in the northwest quadrant, very near the surface. This burial was so fragmentary that it is worthy of no comment beyond the fact that it was probably a flexed burial.

Burial No. 1

Burial No. 1, a multiple secondary burial, contained the disarticulated skeletons of six individuals, four adults and two children. Like all the bones from the site, the bones from Burial No. 1 had suffered very seriously from post mortem erosion and decay. Almost all of the articular surfaces were missing from the long bones, and the diaphyses themselves were soft and flexible. This condition of the bones at the site is difficult to explain, since the soil, with a pH of 7, is neither acid nor alkaline.

All of the bones from this burial were examined for evidence of gnawing, as this is frequently found on bones when the body has been placed on a scaffold at death. None was found. Cut-marks, suggestive of dismembering, were found, however, on the costal surface of a left scapula, and on the distal end of a right humerus.

Of the adults, two were at least 45 years old, and probably males. Neither age nor sex of the other two could be determined. The children were aged about 6 and 13. The bones were thoroughly mixed together, and appear to have been liberally sprinkled with powdered hematite prior to their burial, as the hematite appears on all surfaces, not just the upper surfaces of the bones. The four adults were all seriously afflicted with arthritis.

Burial No. 2

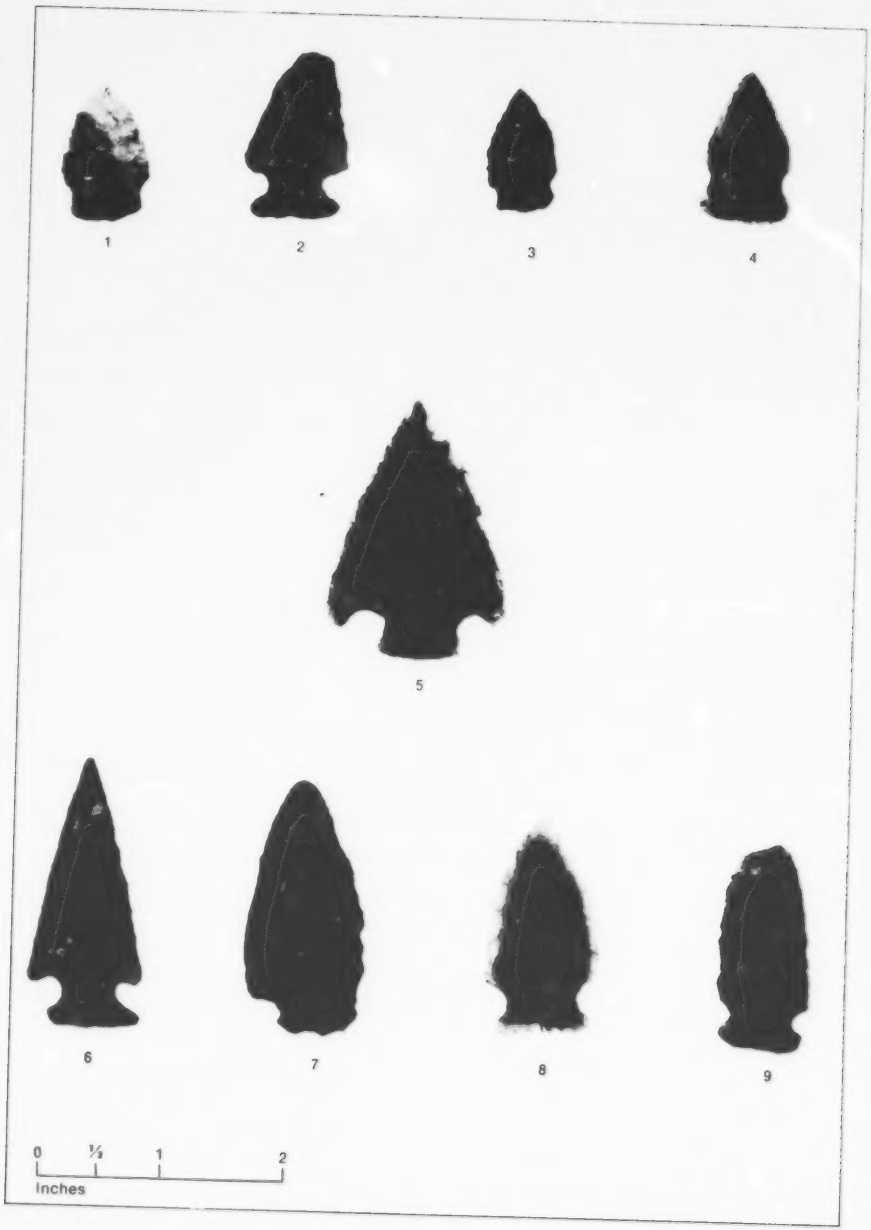
The second burial was that of a child aged about 5 years. This skeleton, the only primary burial in the mound, was tightly flexed, lying on its left side and heading northeast.

6 Projectile points.

Burial No. 3

Like Burial No. 1, this was a multiple, secondary burial. Unlike the first, however, this grave contained four bundle burials, placed side by side, with the long bones oriented in a north-south direction. The bundles contained the bones of three adults, probably in their thirties or forties, and one younger person about 14 or 16 years old. In addition to the four discreet bundles, the grave also contained scattered bones of two children aged about three and six.

A peculiarity of this burial was the presence of a vivid, purple pigment on a number of the bones. Analysis showed this to be a mechanical mixture of two sizes of hematite particles. The finely divided particles were red ochre, while the coarser black crystalline particles were hematite.



The specimens discussed below were found randomly scattered throughout the mound fill; that is, their inclusion in the mound was accidental. They represent the refuse that is usually found on an Indian village site, and they occurred in the mound only because the mound builders gathered up the earth from a contemporary, or earlier, village. I emphasize this point because the artifacts found in the mound do not necessarily tell us anything about the mound-builders themselves. Theoretically, the artifacts could have been made and used by the mound-builders; but they could, with equal validity, have been made by a different people, and at a much earlier date. The artifacts, as such, can be attributed to the Laurel culture. It is my opinion that the burials, too, were Laurel. In the absence of grave furniture, however, this cannot be demonstrated.

Projectile Points

The nine projectile points from the site (Fig. 6) are representative of a wide variety of forms and materials.[2] Chalcedony, quartzite, slate, basalt and flint are all present, and it would appear from an examination of the chips from the site that chalcedony, flint and taconite were favourite materials. The chalcedony is almost certainly derived from the Dakotas, while the remaining material is of local origin.

Table 1: Projectile Points

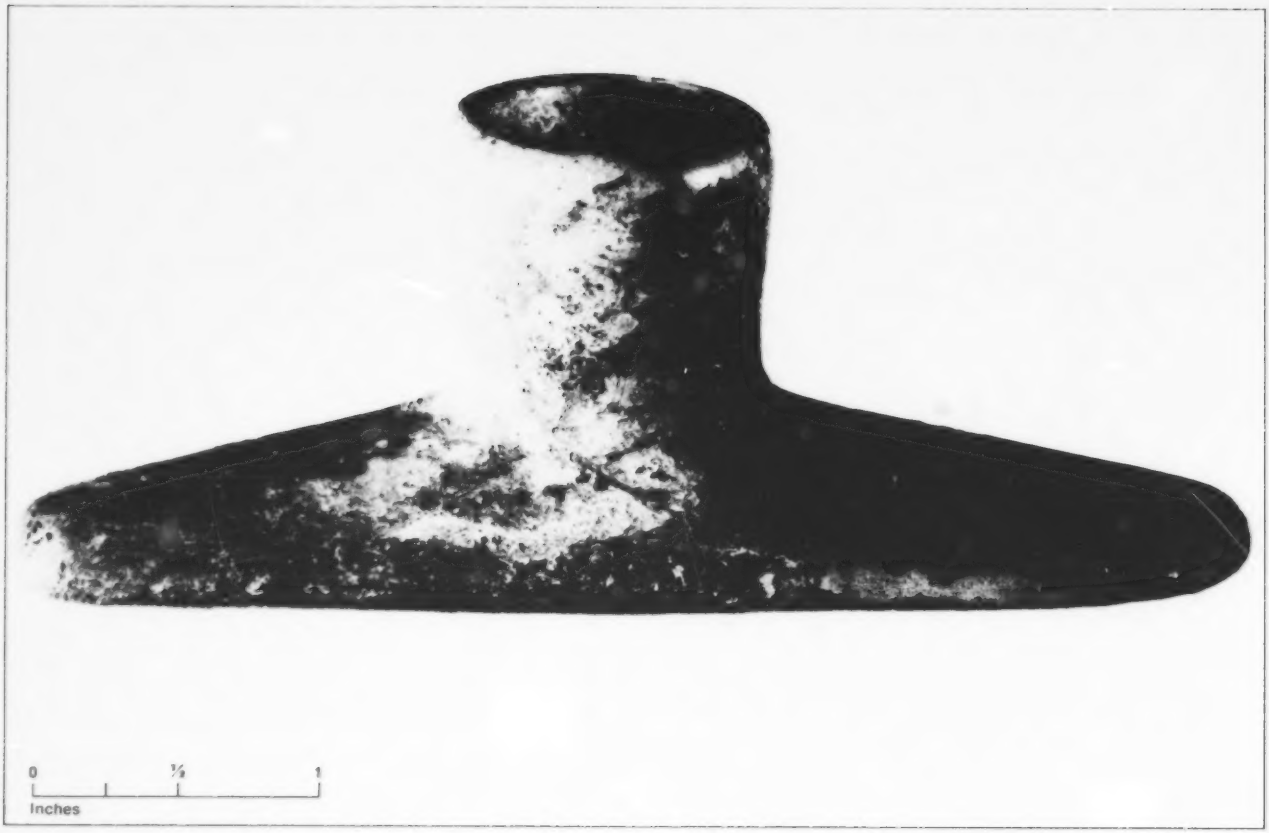
Number	Material	Index
1	Flint	58.0
2	Flint	56.4
3	Basalt	57.7
4	Chalcedony	60.6
5	Chalcedony	67.3
6	Flint	41.1
7	Slate	—
8	Chalcedony	52.6
9	Quartzite	42.5 (?)

With the exception of No. 5, the point forms appear to be consistent with the typology established by MacNeish (1958: 95-6). Point No. 5, however, is a different

8 Sucking tube (?)

0 1/4 1/2 1
Inches

9 Monitor pipe.



matter. It is totally inconsistent with the collections I have seen on Rainy River, as well as the published material from adjacent areas. Almost certainly it is related to the Illinois Hopewell culture, and specifically to Type 3b in Maxwell's (1951) typology.

Scrapers

Of the 26 scrapers (Fig. 7) from the site, 13 can be identified as end scrapers, 9 as side scrapers, and four indeterminate. The end scrapers all have a steeply sloped cutting end on the flakes from which they are formed. The side scrapers tend to be fashioned from thinner flakes than the end scrapers, and invariably have a less steep cutting edge.

Materials present in the sample of scrapers are: flint, 13; chalcedony, 6; taconite, 3; quartzite, 3, and jasper, 1. No association was noted between either form of scraper and variety of material from which they were made.

Pigments

Sixteen lumps of hematite, goethite, limonite and yellow ochre were found in the mound fill. Several of these lumps had one or more ground facets where pigment had been removed. The lumps ranged in size from 5 mm. to 11 cm. Smaller fragments were noted but not collected.

Copper Artifacts

The only bead found was formed by rolling up a thin strip of native copper. The bead is 9 mm. long and 5 mm. in diameter.

A single triangular point of native copper was found. It is rectangular in cross section and is 3 cm. long, 6 mm. thick and 14 mm. broad at the base.

Charmstones

Two walnut-sized stones, natural formations which closely resemble a turtle and

10 Miscellaneous stone tools

the head of an animal, were found in the mound fill. While these are not artifacts in the sense that they were modified by man, they were out of geological context, and had almost certainly been collected as charms or ornaments by the Indians.

Sucking Tube

Although this object might be a tubular stone pipe, it shows no trace of burning, nor has the tubular tobacco pipe ever been reported on Rainy River or adjacent areas. It is more probable, therefore, that this is a sucking tube used by a medicine man to draw out a spirit or object which was causing an ailment.

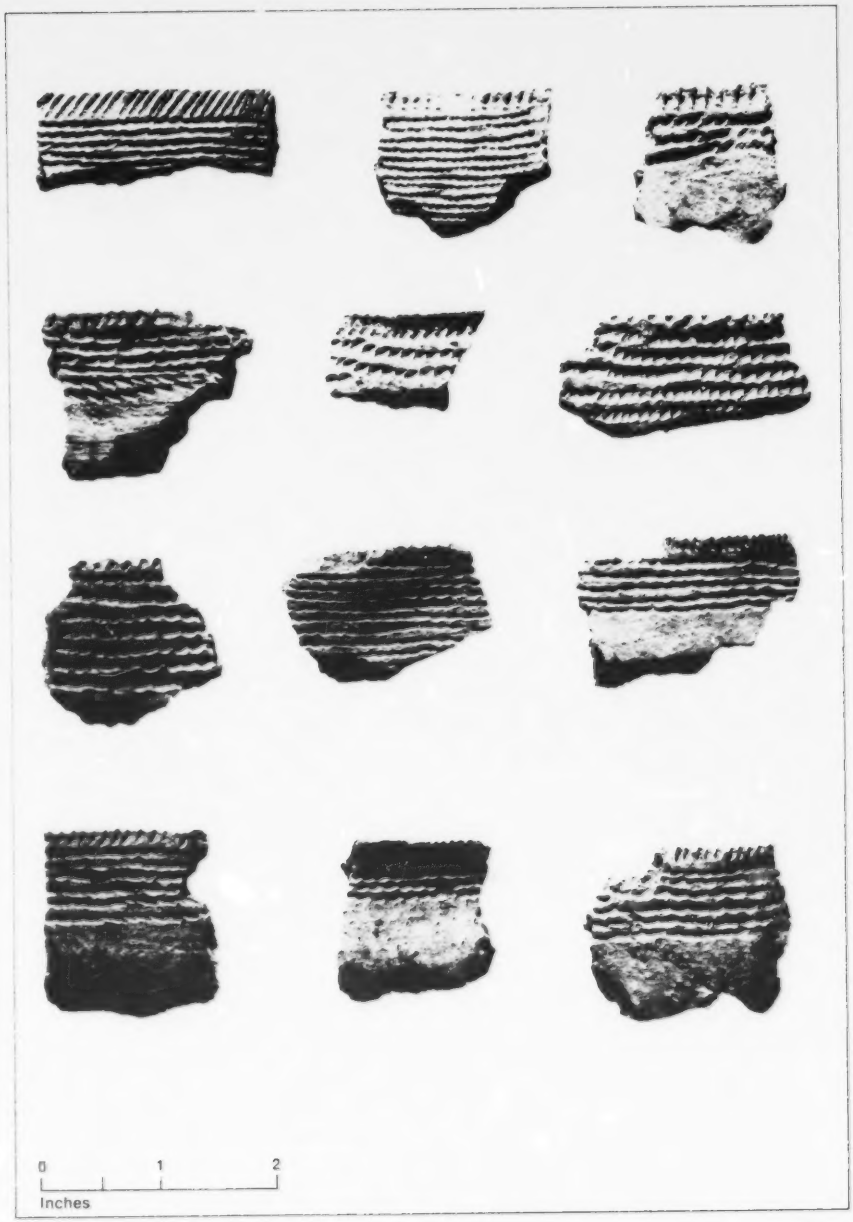
This specimen (Fig. 8, *a, b*) carved from a soft, pink stone, has an over-all length of 9.7 cm. Its major diameter, apart from the pair of frogs which are carved in low relief on opposite sides of the tube, is 5.6 cm. The hole through the object has a diameter of 1.2 cm. at the small end which expands irregularly to a diameter of 2.2 cm.

In color and texture, the specimen is identical with museum artifacts and blocks of quarried material which are labelled as "Minnesota catlinite." Under microscopic examination, also, the physical characteristics are similar. When subjected to X-ray diffraction analysis, however, we find that the sucking tube is composed of orthoclase plus quartzite, while the catlinite is composed of illite. This does not necessarily *prove* that the material is not catlinite, however, because of the following observations which are quoted from Mr. R. M. Organ's examination report:

In view of the fact that sedimentary rocks can contain a mixture of minerals these results should be taken to indicate only the mineral that predominates in each sample.

Although at first sight the . . . samples appear to differ considerably it would be necessary to investigate thoroughly the normal variation in composition of the rock catlinite before asserting that the sucking tube was not made from it or that the material of the tube originated at some

11 Lockport Linear rimsherds.



geographical area other than the Minnesota deposits.

Although we cannot be certain at this stage of our investigations, the data at hand suggested that the specimen is not fashioned from Minnesota catlinite. Nor are we successful in attempting to identify the specimen through an analysis of its form. The only specimen which can be considered at all comparable is described (Gillihan and Beeson 1960: 50-1) as an atlatl weight of red Ohio pipestone with a double serpent design carved in low relief. This specimen is from the Gamble Site, near Laurenceville, Illinois, which was occupied primarily through late Hopewellian times, or from A.D. 300 to sometime after A.D. 600.

Pipe

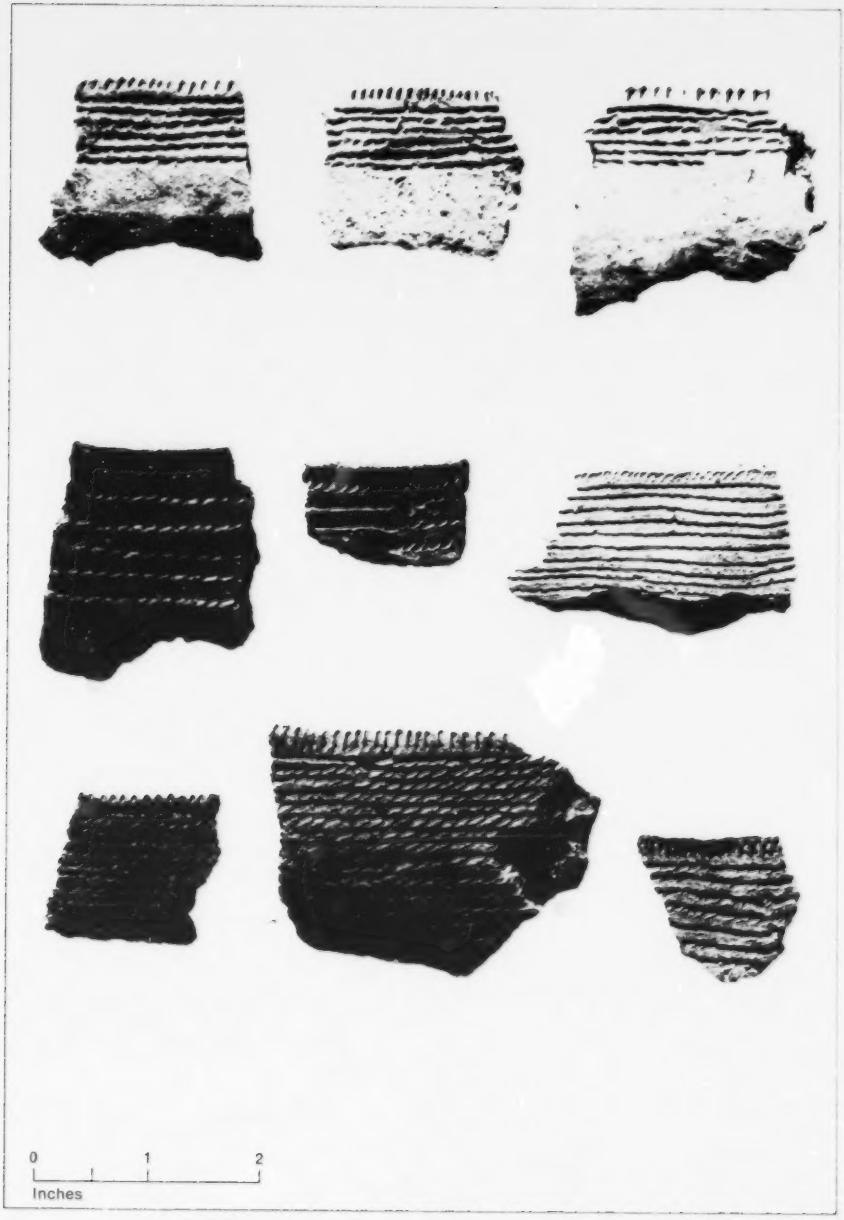
A single monitor pipe (Fig. 9) was unearthed during the excavations. It is 11.4 cm. long with an oval base 3.4 cm. wide. Total height is 4.5 cm. The highly polished, cream-coloured surface appears to be glazed, but physical and chemical analysis reveals that this is a natural, weathered surface. The underlying, unweathered material is grey. In appearance, it is indistinguishable from that of blocked-end tubes in the Royal Ontario Museum collections which are labelled as being fashioned from Ohio pipestone. X-ray diffraction analysis of the blocked-end tubes produces the powder pattern of kaolinite. Similar analysis of the monitor pipe material shows that it was carved from a soft, grey, iron-containing kaolin. Therefore the monitor pipe and the blocked-end tubes are made of different but related materials.

Until a long and complicated series of tests are run on the Ohio quarries (and those of Minnesota as well) we cannot be certain, but at present, all available data point to Hopewellian influence on Rainy River in late Hopewell times.

Hammerstone

A single hammerstone was located, a large syenite cobble, roughly wedge-shaped, with a length of 10.5 cm., a width of 9.4 cm.,

12 Lockport Linear rimsherds



and a thickness of 6.9 cm. The thin edge of the wedge is blunted throughout its entire length from extensive use.

Miscellaneous Stone Objects

Apart from one specimen, these seven artifacts are possibly all abraders. The anomalous slate specimen (Fig. 10, *1*) appears to be the base of some larger broken object. It has small corner notches, and both edges between the notches and the break are lightly polished, probably through use. The specimen has two broad, shallow grooves on its upper surface, with a number of short faint scratches in each groove.

Two thin, rectangular pieces of slate (Fig. 10, *4*) each have a highly polished side which has been used as an abrader. Another abrader is a roughly rectangular block of fine-grained, red sandstone, 6.8 cm. long, 3.8 cm. wide and 1.9 cm. thick. The thin schist object (Fig. 10, *5*) may have been an abrader, as it has one highly polished spot on its reverse side. It is more probable, however, that it is part of an unfinished object which fractured in process of manufacture.

The final object in this group (Fig. 10, *3*) is fashioned from a fine-grained metamorphic material. This may be a scraper, as is suggested by the steeply chipped, curved cutting edge. More probably, however, this too is part of some larger object.

13 *1-4*, Cord- or fabric-impressed rimsherds; *5-10*, Lockport Plain rimsherds.

With a few exceptions to be noted as they arise, the pottery from the Armstrong Site may be considered to be the same as that described by MacNeish (1958: 142 ff.) as Laurel Plain Ware. Two notable exceptions here are, first, the Armstrong pottery is much thinner, with an average thickness of 5.02 mm. and a range of 3-10 mm.: second, the Armstrong pottery is much harder, having an average hardness of 4.9 on Mohs' scale. In other words, while the Armstrong and the Manitoba Laurel wares are largely identical, the former is thinner, harder and denser. Stoltman (1962: 111) found that the same is true of the Laurel ware from Minnesota also.

Rim Sherds

With the exception of nine cord- or fabric-impressed specimens, all of the rims (258) from the Armstrong Site fitted typological categories that had been previously established by MacNeish (1958) and Stoltman (1962). These pottery types are listed in Table 2, and are illustrated in Figures 11 to 15.

Table 2: Pottery Type Distribution

Type	No.	%
Lockport Linear	137	53.10
Lockport Plain	42	16.28
Nutimik Oblique	33	12.79
Cemetery Point Incised	23	08.91
Cord or Fabric Impressed	9	03.49
Laurel Linear Stamped	9	03.49
Laurel Dentate	3	01.16
Pseudo Scallop-Shell	2	00.78
Total	258	100.00

The cord- or fabric-impressed rims are, on superficial examination, almost identical with the Lockport Linear rims. Only with detailed examination under a handglass can the distinction between the two types be detected. Attempts to document the distinction photographically were unsuccessful.

In Table 3 is listed distribution of the individual characteristics or attributes of

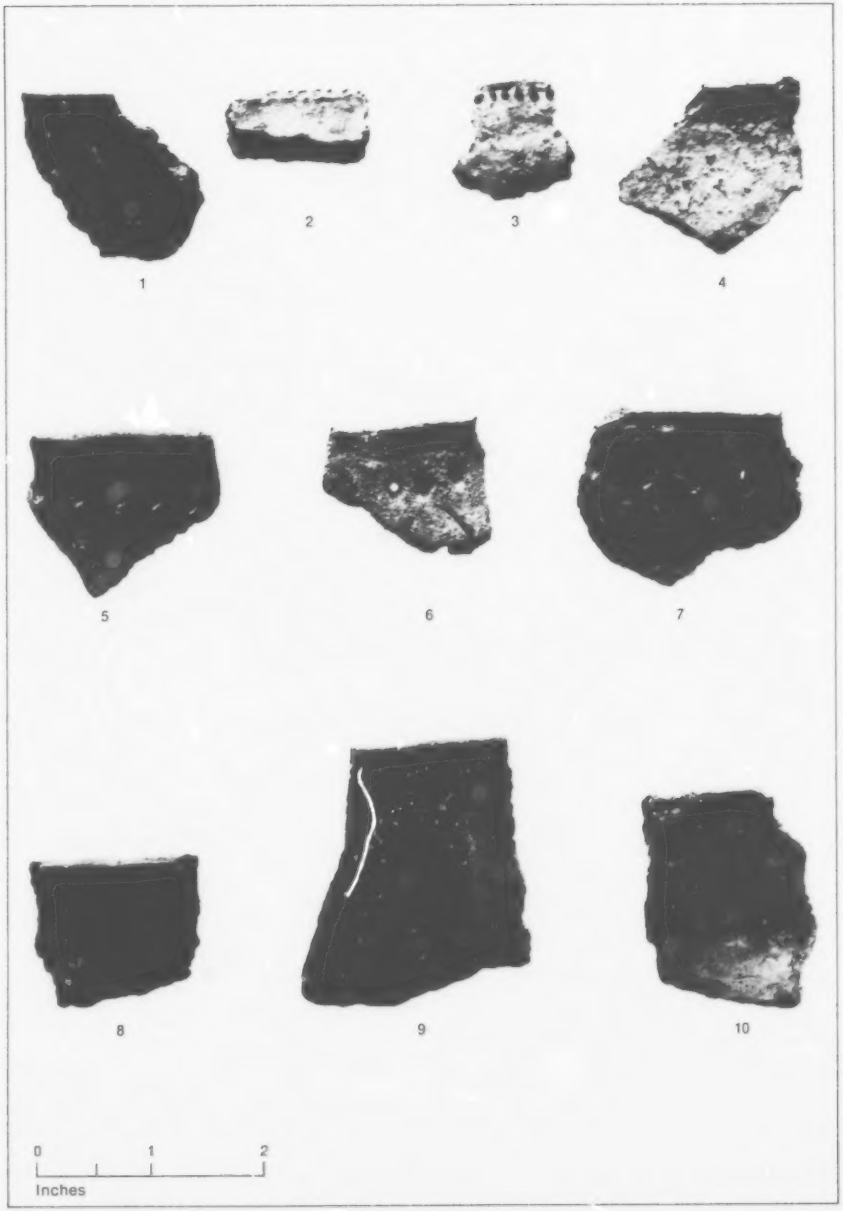
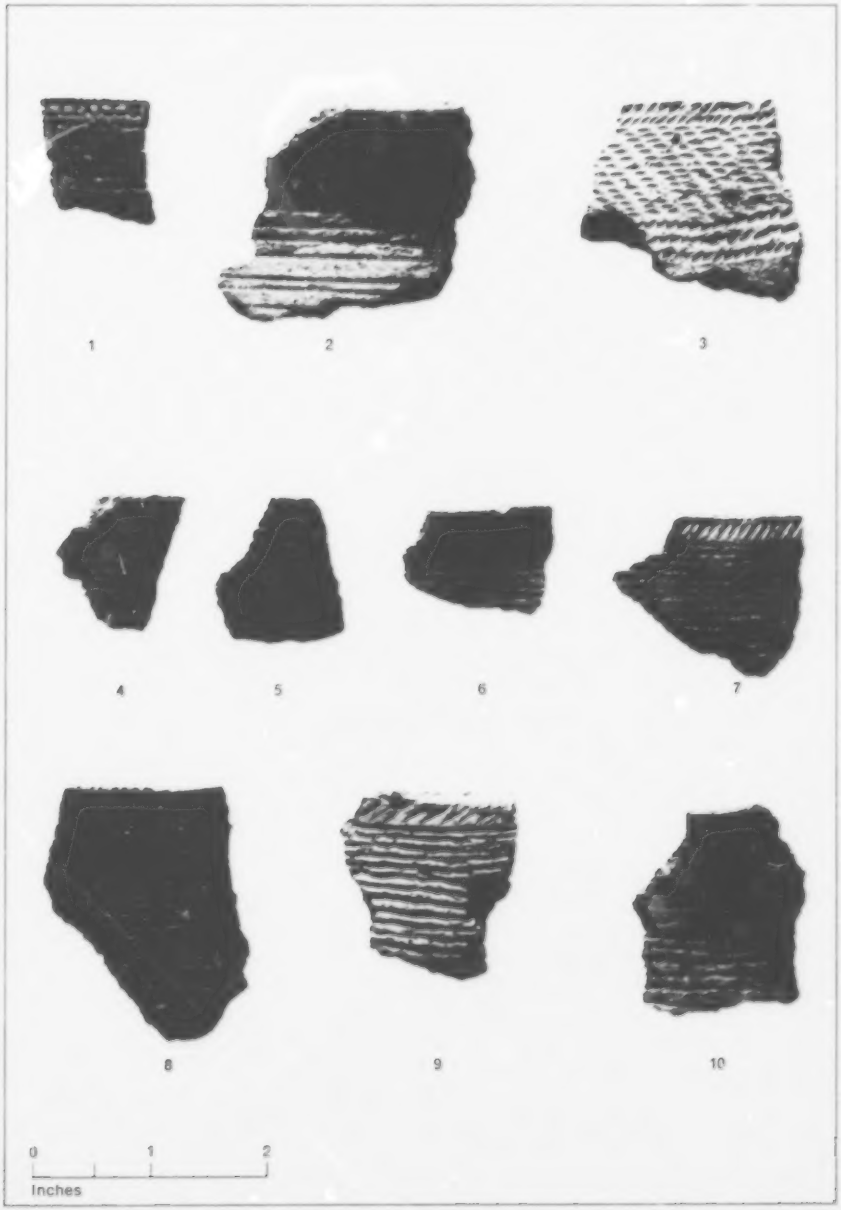


Table 3: Attribute Distribution on Decorated Rims

Exterior	Interior	Lip	Anomalies	Total
Lockport Linear	plain	plain	none	109
Lockport Linear	plain	linear stamp	none	21
Lockport Linear	plain	linear dentate stamp	none	6
Lockport Linear	plain	plain	diagonal design element	1
Lockport Plain	plain	plain	exterior punctates	31
Lockport Plain	interior bosses (1 row)	plain	exterior punctates	8
Lockport Plain	interior punctates (1 row)	plain	exterior bosses	3
Nutimik Oblique	plain	plain	none	24
Nutimik Oblique	plain	linear dentate stamp	none	6
Nutimik Oblique	plain	linear stamp	none	3
Cemetery Point Incised	plain	plain	exterior punctates	13
Cemetery Point Incised	plain	linear stamp	exterior punctates	8
Cemetery Point Incised	plain	linear punctates	exterior punctates	2
Cord or Fabric Impressed	plain	plain	none	5
Cord or Fabric Impressed	plain	linear stamp	none	3
Cord or Fabric Impressed	plain	linear dentate stamp	none	1
Laurel Linear Stamp	plain	plain	exterior punctates	9
Linear Dentate Stamp	interior punctates (1 row) interior punctates (2 rows)	plain	exterior bosses	2
Linear Dentate Stamp	interior bosses (1 row)	incised cross hatching	exterior punctates	1
Pseudo Scallop Shell	plain	plain	exterior punctates	2

ceramic decoration. At this time, the distribution of these attributes has no particular significance, apart from the fact that it is an essential part of the record. When more data are available, however, these attributes will almost certainly be re-combined to form more precisely defined pottery types.

14 Miscellaneous rimsherds. *1*, Pseudo Scallop Shell; *2*, Laurel Dentate; *3*, Lockport Linear (variant); *4-10*, Cemetery Point Incised.



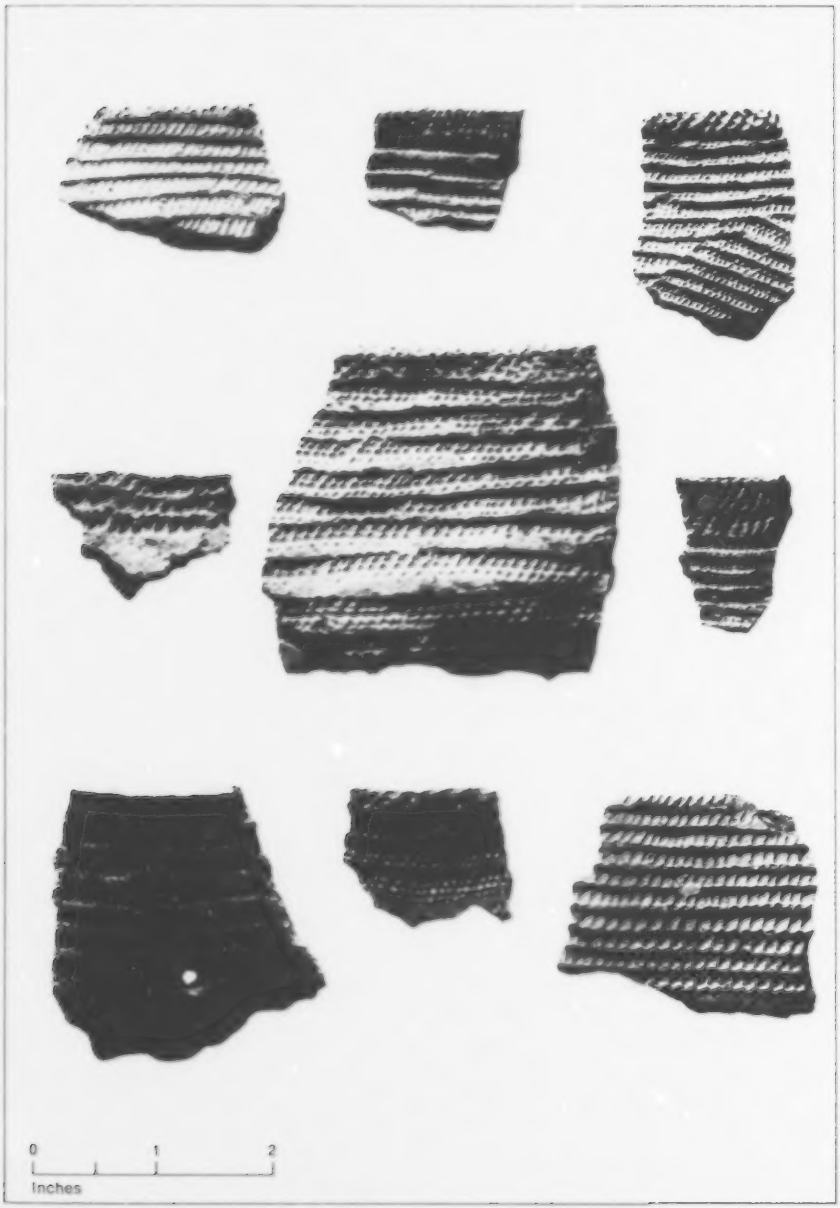
Conclusions

The Armstrong Mound is a roughly circular tumulus situated on a terrace overlooking the Long Sault Rapids on Rainy River. This particular structure is but one element in a large ceremonial complex of at least 11 mounds on the site. Although no systematic excavation has been undertaken prior to the investigations described in this report, an examination of several surface collections suggests very strongly that the site has been occupied for some 8,000 years.

When we cut a trench through the centre of the Armstrong Mound and examined a vertical profile, we found that the mound had been constructed by piling up individual basket-loads of earth. Beneath the mound was a rectangle formed of pine logs; within the rectangle were the bodies of 13 people, in three different locations. Burial No. 2 contained the body of a child, lying on its left side with the knees flexed. Burials 1 and 3 each contained the disarticulated skeletons of six individuals, liberally painted with red ochre. These bodies, at death, had either been buried or placed on a scaffolding, probably the latter. At a later date, the bones were collected, painted and deposited in their final resting place.

In the absence of grave furniture, it is impossible to identify culturally the people who were buried in the Armstrong Mound. Both the size and the contour of the mound, however, suggest that it can be attributed to the Laurel culture. Most of the artifacts that were found in the mound fill are Laurel, and some randomly scattered test pits in the area reveal the presence of a large Laurel village. The pottery types from the mound are like those described by both MacNeish and Stoltman as being early Laurel. Although no C-14 dates are available, it has been estimated that this culture flourished in southern Manitoba from about 1,500 to 1,000 years ago. A lump of charcoal from one of the logs in the Armstrong Mound was submitted to Isotopes, Inc. for a C-14 age determination. This sample (NMC-118 [1-2594]) yielded a date of 1,010 ± 100 years, or A.D. 957. It should be noted incidentally, that this date applies to the

15 Nutimik Oblique rimsherds



building of the mound, not to the manufacture of the pottery and other artifacts that were scattered throughout the mound fill. The artifacts are the usual debris that one finds when excavating an Indian village. They are in the mound only because some of the earth to build the mound was taken from an Indian village site. But that village could have been abandoned for an indefinite period before the mound was built.

On the basis of the C-14 date and the reliability of MacNeish's estimate regarding the age of Laurel materials in Manitoba, we can assume, *pro tem*, that the village is in fact an early Laurel village, and that the mound is a Late Laurel mound, built about 1,000 years ago.

Having excavated the Armstrong Mound, we have established certain matters of fact. These, in turn, suggest certain hypotheses which can be verified, or rejected, by future excavation. There are sufficient mounds and village areas along the Long Sault Rapids to work out the sequence in which the mounds were built, as well as the sequence of pottery types which occurred throughout the history of the Laurel peoples.

Endnotes

1 The logs were identified as white pine (*Pinus strobus* L.) by Professor J. J. Balatinecz, Department of Forestry, University of Toronto.

2 Lithic materials were identified through the courtesy of Dr. W. Tovell, Curator of Geology, Dr. J. Manderino, Curator of Mineralogy, and Mr. R. M. Organ, Curator of Conservation, all of the Royal Ontario Museum, University of Toronto.

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